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Indy's **Choice**

HIGH NOON

Statehouse stand-off over GOP agenda
PG. 8

SOCIAL CURRENCY

Stutz show explores social media
PG. 19

BEN TAYLOR

Joins dad James on stage
PG. 26

the
All-ages art
of Emma Overman
by dan grossman



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OF THE WEEK

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MARCH 2 - 9, 2011

VOL. 21 ISSUE 54 ISSUE #1029

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THE ALL-AGES ART OF EMMA OVERMAN

Childhood icons take on mature themes in Emma Overman's latest solo exhibit, *Carousel: A Gilded Memory of Literature, Movies, and Animal Crackers*, which opens First Friday, March 4, at Harrison Center for the Arts.

BY DAN GROSSMAN

COVER PHOTO BY STEPHEN SIMONETTO

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SEASON ON THE BRINK

Indiana House Democrats have entered their second week of absence from the statehouse, an evasive tactic effectively blocking the aggressive Republican agenda. Now at the forefront of a national debate over union power, legislators find themselves in a standoff across state lines.

BY AUSTIN CONSIDINE

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ANDY CHEN'S SOCIAL CURRENCY

Chen's curated show, *Social Currency*, addresses the interaction of our physical world and the World Wide Web, specifically the effect social media has on photography. The exhibit, opening Friday at StutzArtSpace, includes portraiture work by several artists exploring the progression of photo-sharing online.

BY DAN GROSSMAN

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INDIANA'S FIRST INDONESIAN FARE

Dutch transplant and restaurateur Peter Oomkes is bringing the taste of Indonesia to Indiana. His restaurant, Garuda, featuring cuisine from the lush constellation of islands, opens its 52nd & College location Tuesday, March 8.

BY DAVID HOPPE

from the readers

For the record

Just FYI, there was an error in NUVO's writeup of the movie *Memento* in the "Film Clips" section of the most recent issue.

Memento was definitely "trailblazing," as the writer said, but it's not Christopher Nolan's first film. His first movie was called *Following* — a fair to middling effort. *Memento* was much better and remains, in my humble opinion, his best film, despite delusional fanboys' misguided enthusiasm for the hollow, overwrought and (despite its cerebral nature) thunderingly literal *Inception*.

Todd Lothery
INDIANAPOLIS



WRITE TO NUVO

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**Wednesday, March 2 –
Sunday, March 6**

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Spring 2011 Christel DeHaan Visiting International
Theatre Artist; March 2, 3, 4 and 5 at 8 p.m.,
March 5 and 6 at 2 p.m.
Lilly Hall, Studio Theatre, Room 168
Tickets: \$10 general admission; \$5 student

Friday, March 4

Piano at Butler Recital*

Simon Docking
Co-sponsored by the Waters Project and the
Indianapolis Piano Teachers Guild;
8 p.m., Eidson-Duckwall Recital Hall

Saturday, March 5

Piano at Butler Master Class*

Simon Docking
Co-sponsored by the Waters Project and the
Indianapolis Piano Teachers Guild.
10:30 a.m., Eidson-Duckwall Recital Hall

Butler Baseball vs. Oakland*

Noon, Bulldog Park

Butler Baseball vs. Oakland*

3 p.m., Bulldog Park

Sunday, March 6

Butler Baseball vs. Oakland*

Noon, Bulldog Park

Butler Men's Tennis vs. Dayton*

Noon, Tennis Bubble

Butler Baseball vs. Oakland*

3 p.m., Bulldog Park

Monday, March 7

Vivian S. Delbrook Visiting Writers Series*

Bob Hicok
7:30 p.m., Robertson Hall, Johnson Room

Tuesday, March 8

Butler Baseball vs. Taylor*

3 p.m., Bulldog Park

Faculty Artist Series — Larry Shapiro, Violin*

7:30 p.m., Eidson-Duckwall Recital Hall

Saturday, March 12

Butler Women's Tennis vs. Western Michigan*

11 a.m., Tennis Bubble

Sunday, March 13

Butler Women's Tennis vs. Houston*

2 p.m., Tennis Bubble



Monday, March 7

**J. James Woods Lectures in the Sciences
and Mathematics***

"Conservation, African Elephants and
American Land Trusts"

Katy Payne

7:30 p.m., Atherton Union, Reilly Room

*Free of charge, no ticket required



For the latest on Butler University's
events visit www.butler.edu.



Mitch to the rescue

His presidential dreams are keeping us safe

STEVE HAMMER
SHAMMER@NUVO.NET

If one ever needed a reminder that elections have consequences, look no further than the standoff between Republicans and Democrats in our General Assembly last week. With just a few more people voting Democratic in the last election, we might have avoided becoming one of the nation's laughingstocks.

If people hadn't been too busy to vote last November, our legislature wouldn't be as full as mouth-breathing knuckle-draggers as it is, and we might not be in the mess in which we currently find ourselves.

Emboldened by talk radio, right-wing blogs and Fox News commentators, our legislators apparently want to pass legislation negating nearly 100 years of progress in the law and drop us back in the 1920s, when companies owned the fate of their employees and workers had only the right to come to work or be fired.

If they effectively outlaw unions, as state Republicans are proposing, our legislators could feel so empowered that they might ban slacks for women next. It's impossible to know where these zealots would stop if left unchecked.

Luckily for us, there's one man standing in between us and these nutty Republicans, and that's our wonderful Gov. Mitch Daniels. He's the only one who can turn off the fever for radical change sweeping our legislature.

Don't get me wrong; Mitch is no friend of the working man. He studied how to bust unions under Ronald Reagan and how to bankrupt economies under George W. Bush. The working class people protesting at the Statehouse since last week aren't his friends or a group he even cares about.

But he's going to try to squash this debate and get the legislature back to work because he's too busy running for president that he doesn't want to focus on anything else.

In less than a year, he's going to have to try to convince the voters of Iowa and New Hampshire that he's not a crazy hillbilly who wants to destroy their jobs. So when the legislators acted like crazy hillbillies and tried to destroy Hoosier jobs, Mitch needed to step in and calm things down.

Any talk of outlawing unions is going to have to wait until Mitch's presiden-

tial campaign is over. It also means that going forward, possibly, things might not be as crazy as they seem to be in the General Assembly.

Mitch is still a front-line soldier in the Republican Party's plan to eliminate the middle class; but he knows that timing is everything. Killing organized labor, outlawing abortion, naming every street and building after Reagan — all of that can wait, at least another year.

Our governor's ambitions are the only thing keeping us safe from turning into a third world economy. We need to bolster his candidacy as long as we can, for he is the last hope we have.

Democratic legislators can't live as refugees in the liberated territory of Illinois forever. Eventually, they'll have to come home to feed their pets, mow their lawns and buy groceries. Their actions in fleeing the state were courageous but remarkably short-sighted.

That's why we need to support our governor. As long as he thinks he has a chance in hell of becoming the Republican nominee for president next year, he's going to keep the most rabid Republicans in check.

Our trade unions need to start distributing "Daniels for President" T-shirts to all their members. People should start naming their children after him. We need to do whatever it takes to boost Mitch's ego and keep the

Republican legislature off our backs.

Destroying collective bargaining is part of the grand scheme to eradicate the middle class and turn our state's workers into zombies. The stakes are too high for us to allow this to happen. And since keeping the ego of Daniels at a high level is the only thing keeping us from destruction, boost his ego we must.

That means posting his official portrait in all homes, churches and businesses. It may mean requiring a copy of his collective speeches to be studied by our schoolchildren. It may also mean commissioning phony polls showing him with high approval ratings in Iowa.

Without any warning, the Republicans in the Statehouse have declared war on all the state's working families. Our jobs, our schools, our public safety — they all hang in the balance.

Only Mitch can save us now, and that can happen only if he thinks he has a realistic chance of becoming president.

So open up your wallets and give to his campaign. Wear a Mitch button everywhere you go. Sure, he's in favor of destroying prosperity as much as any Republican. But for now, he's the only person keeping us safe from the Indiana Taliban.

"We love you, Mr. Governor!" "Keep up the good work!" Practice these phrases. Right now, they're all we have. ■

Our governor's ambitions are the only thing keeping us safe from turning into a third world economy.

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HOPPE



Saying yes to pot

Senate approves study

BY DAVID HOPPE
DHOPPE@NUVO.NET

This year's gathering of the Indiana General Assembly will be remembered as a shambles. Republicans got greedy, Democrats got lost and the legislative process turned into a train wreck.

But amidst the rubble and twisted steel otherwise known as "the people's business," a few rays of common sense were able to shine through.

Almost unremarked in last week's tumult was the State Senate's approval of Senate Bill 192 by Portage's Democratic Senator, Karen Tallian. This bill calls for a study of Indiana's marijuana policies. The study would show what it costs us to arrest and lock up people for smoking pot, as well as the potential forms of revenue more lenient marijuana laws could generate for the state through regulation and taxation.

The Criminal Law and Sentencing Policy Study Committee would conduct the study later this year. SB 192 empowers the committee to make findings and recommendations regarding current marijuana law and penalties. It would make an accounting of what our present policies cost the state, while also examining what might happen if marijuana were made available for medical use and possession of small amounts were decriminalized. Finally, the committee would report on what the state could expect if it controlled marijuana like alcohol, with regulated sales and taxes.

Amazingly, this Democrat-conceived bill was approved in the Republican-dominated Senate by a vote of 28-21. Now it goes to the House for further consideration. Since all SB 192 seeks to do is collect and present information, it may stand a chance of being authorized, in which case a lot of what people already know about our marijuana laws will be bound beneath a cover bearing the state seal.

This is encouraging to anyone who has ever wondered at the bizarre, utterly irrational approach our governments – local, state and federal – have chosen when it comes to pot. Since federal enactment of the Marijuana Tax Act in 1937, American law enforcement has clung to the idea that it could do to marijuana what it failed to accomplish with alcohol: make prohibition work.

Prohibition was this country's attempt to ban alcoholic beverages. The Volstead Act, as Prohibition was called, went into effect in 1920 in spite of President Woodrow Wilson's veto. Wilson must have surmised that the law was unenforceable. Over the

course of the next 13 years, not only did the American people refuse to swear off liquor, they aided and abetted the rise of an illegal underground, gangsters, to supply it.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt got Congress to repeal Prohibition. People could drink legally again. Local, state and federal governments instead began collecting revenue, in the form of taxes. Now the government was profiting, instead of the bootleggers.

The attempt to resurrect Prohibition and aim it at marijuana in 1937 was driven by race and class bias. As Harry Anslinger, the country's first drug czar, told Congress: "Most of the marijuana smokers in the U.S. are Negroes, Mexicans and entertainers." No one, that is, with the power to stop the government from bullying them.

The notion that using marijuana was part of an underclass, and that this gave law enforcement the power to do whatever it wanted when it came to searches and seizures, persisted into the 1960s.

But when middle-class white kids began turning on, history shifted gears. Marijuana was finding its way into privileged households (albeit with towels pressed against the bottom of bedroom doors) and people were finding that the world didn't fall to pieces if they got high.

Before long, these same people were middle-aged, with successful careers. Lo and behold, they were still getting high (if they

could get the stuff without feeling hopelessly uncool) and the world was still intact.

There were, unfortunately, needless casualties along the way. People were busted and some are still doing ridiculous amounts of hard prison time for having the bad luck or bad judgment to be caught holding. Why, even our governor was

nabbed when he was a college student in 1970; he was lucky and walked away with a \$350 fine, though that was serious money in those days.

Government's prejudice against marijuana has also served to inhibit potentially valuable scientific research that could confirm or credibly rebut claims for marijuana's medicinal value.

And, as SB 192 implies, the policy of marijuana prohibition has burned through large amounts of public funds, diverted police officers from more important jobs, tied up already overcrowded court dockets, and further stressed our prison system. Meanwhile, local and state governments have denied themselves valuable tax revenues and prevented citizens from making a legal living growing and dispensing a substance that experience demonstrates is far more benign than many legally sanctioned drugs like cigarettes and other, supposedly respectable, medications.

Even if SB 192 goes forward, there is no guarantee that reason will prevail in our otherwise dysfunctional Statehouse. But it's heartening that, in this dismal season, so many politicians were willing to put prejudice aside and say yes to finding out more about pot. ■

**People were
finding that the
world didn't fall
to pieces if they
got high.**



HAIKU NEWS

by Jim Poyser

- Tunisia PM
joins president in the ass
heap of history
- Wisconsin gov'nor
thinking he's talking to Koch
sure sounds like a dick
- Deputy AG
calls for live ammunition
and finds his job dead
- South Bend restaurant
pulls billboards 'cause Hoosiers can't
stomach Jim Jones jokes
- Bush cancels plan to
attend Denver summit for
fear he'll be leaked on
- if government shuts
down will Republicans get
out of our bedrooms?
- Hoosier Democrats
bereft of hope decide to
shop for other states
- Boeing contract win
reminds us war is top dog
folks are just fodder
- our politicians
are in service to business
not to us: revolt!
- oil at one hundred
bucks a barrel again; get
out your bicycles







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Haiku News.

THOUGHT BITE

By Andy Jacobs Jr.
If "no news is good news," cable news
has nothing but good news.

**THUMBSUP
THUMBSDOWN**

-  **DEMS MAKING ILLINOISE**
If nothing else, Indiana Democrats are earning their merit badges in stubborn resolve. Tuesday marked the beginning of week two of a statehouse walkout by 37 House Democrats, most of whom (taking a cue from Wisconsin senators, no doubt) are hiding out in Illinois. The boycott began as a last-ditch attempt to stop "Right-to-Work" legislation in its tracks. Absent Democrats say they'll come home once Republicans agree to sit down and negotiate. Some may cry petulance, but we've seen walkouts before – by state Republicans, for example. If you can't beat 'em, head for the 'lls.
-  **WINDS OF CHANGE**
A recent survey of Indiana voters indicates strong support for wind farm development, according to the American Wind Energy Association. Commissioned by the AWEA and carried out by research firm Public Opinion Strategies, the poll revealed that 77 percent of Hoosiers are in favor of a proposed requirement that, 10 percent of the state's electricity come from renewable sources by 2020. The support doesn't stop at party lines: Roughly 66 percent of Republicans voiced approval. If and when state legislators get back to business, they'd do well to heed this clue to the consensus.
-  **THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHTER**
An Indiana University study found a 14 percent decrease in car crashes involving minors since the state refocused its licensing standards. Restrictions introduced in 2009 limited nighttime driving hours for minors and prohibited the use of tech devices while driving; 2010's update bumped the permit age from 15 to 15.5 years old and extended the probationary stage until drivers turn 18. Together the rules seem to be working to make a taboo of distracted driving, while allowing teens time to develop good habits behind the wheel. It also adds heft to a statehouse bill that would ban texting while driving: Grownups, you're next.
-  **GOD WHO?**
Indianapolis will join Washington, D.C., and Houston next week in a progressive, multimedia ad campaign, featuring billboards that celebrate secular living. An antidote to the fanatic religious advertising seen along highways outside the city, the Center for Inquiry's signs will state plainly, "You don't need God — to hope, to care, to love, to live." CFI plans to eventually include more cities, appealing to the 15 percent of Americans that reject religious beliefs, according to the latest American Religious Identification Survey. As our state becomes increasingly conservative in representation, it's encouraging to find an approach to improving quality of life that doesn't alienate all you godless liberals.

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Season on the brink

Statehouse at standstill as Dems stage walkout

BY AUSTIN CONSIDINE
ACONSIDINE@NUVO.NET

As House Democrats enter their second week of absence in an attempt to block a package of aggressive Republican labor and education reforms, Indiana has been thrust to the forefront of a national debate over the fate of the American labor movement, with no resolution in sight.

Unlike the Wisconsin bill that has drawn massive protests and deals only with public employee unions, Indiana's so-called "Right-to-Work" bill (RTW), would effectively strip all private sector unions of their collective bargaining power. Contracts or agreements preventing employers from hiring non-union workers would be rendered illegal; requiring union membership as a condition of employment would become a Class A misdemeanor.

Democrats had already indicated they were willing to disrupt the process over RTW on the first day of session in early January. But the decisive moment came when Republicans unexpectedly called a House committee hearing on the controversial bill for Monday, Feb. 22, despite the prognostications of statehouse insiders and public statements by Governor Mitch Daniels that the bill was too divisive.

It was little surprise, then, when 37 House Democrats walked out after Republican committee members approved the bill, amid throngs of protestors who packed the statehouse. House rules say a bill must be introduced to the full House within 24 hours of passing committee to receive a vote; the Democratic walkout prevents the two-thirds House attendance needed for a quorum to accept new legislation, effectively killing the bill for now, along with several others.

Since then, House leaders have found themselves at an impasse, as Democrats remain out of state, and Republicans continue to dig in.

'List of concerns'

Last Tuesday, around the time most House Democrats were leaving the state to hunker down in a roadside hotel in Urbana, Ill., Democrats issued a series of what seemed, at the time, like a list of demands.

"We will remain here until we get assurances from the governor and House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) that these bills will not be called down in the House at any time this session," the statement read.

The statement listed 11 specific problem



PHOTO BY AUSTIN CONSIDINE

Protesters against anti-union legislation face Indiana State Police outside the chambers of the Indiana House of Representatives last week.

bills, including the state budget and RTW — all of them pertaining to labor or education. They included:

HB 1002: Provides for charter school expansion.

HB 1003: Allows a family of four making up to about \$81,500 a year to receive tax dollars, or vouchers, for private school tuition.

HB 1479: Allows the state to take over poorly performing schools and turn them over to for-profit "special management teams" for rehabilitation, including at parents' request.

HB 1203: Precludes unions' right to organize by way of a majority sign-up — also known as a "card-check."

HB 1585: Enshrines in state law a ban on collective bargaining among public employees.

HB 1538: Prevents communities from deciding what wages are appropriate for their area — also known as the "prevailing wage."

As of Monday afternoon, Bauer said in a conference call from Urbana that Democrats had no plans to return under current conditions. But his tone had softened since the initial walkout.

Bauer insisted, as he had for several days, that the list was not a set of demands but "a list of concerns." He would not offer any concrete terms for a Democratic return, nor commitments on how long they were willing to hold out.

But, he clarified, there were at least five or so bills Democrats strongly felt needed "adjustment," in any negotiations.

"I wouldn't weaken (those changes) to the point that it doesn't matter what the adjustments are," he said. "They would have to take away some of the pain, some of the great loss that they cause."

Democrats were willing to discuss all these points with Republicans if Republicans agreed to negotiate, Bauer said. "I'm willing to negotiate anytime, anywhere."

"I'm willing to negotiate anytime, anywhere."

—House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer (D-South Bend)

In a press conference later that day, it was clear that Leader Bosma wasn't buying it: "If (Bauer) says 'anytime, anywhere,' he can be here tomorrow at 10:30 in my office. That'd be fine. I'd love to have a conversation with him."

Bosma said Bauer had never indicated to him in phone conversations that the original demands had softened, as Bauer has emphasized to the press.

It was obvious the party leaders had made little headway.

"If somebody has a great idea about changing a bill... we will continue to listen," he said. "But to toss a list in and say 'we're not going to deal with these 11 issues'... it's just not happening."

Dollars and shoe leather

Democrats and union leaders have portrayed the standoff as an existential struggle for organized labor in America — a battle between the corporate ownership class and a dwindling blue-collar class, formerly known as the middle class.

"What we're looking at are efforts to weaken opportunities for voice among low- and middle-income employees, and strengthening opportunities for voice among corporate America," said Lisa Blomgren Bingham, professor of public service at Indiana University-Bloomington's School of Public and Environmental Affairs, referring to legislation like RTW.

Prevailing wisdom, at large and among Democrats inside the statehouse, says that what's going on in Indiana, Wisconsin and Ohio is more about politics than trimming budgets — a fight for dollars and shoe leather that could upset the balance of the two-party political system. In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, which granted corporations the rights of citizens to make campaign donations, they say union-busting legislation could be another nail in the coffin of the Democratic machine.

As for the unions themselves, recent Indiana history demonstrates the kind of dramatic effect RTW-style bills can have.

In a recent interview with *The New York Times*, Daniels claimed that membership in public employee unions had dropped 90 percent since he effectively stripped them of their collective bargaining by executive order in 2005.

But where Daniels touted the shift as a victory — "It was absolutely central to our turnaround here," he said — critics in *The Times* article pointed to a host of hardships created for state employees, including "no raises for state employees in some years, a weakening of seniority preferences and a far greater freedom to consolidate state operations or outsource them to private companies."

High noon

After the walkout, Republicans were quick to say they would drop RTW this session — pushing, instead, for a summer study committee.

Regardless, some accuse Democrats of overreaching by remaining out of state.

"If (Democrats) are holding the process hostage, I'm not responding in a positive way," Bosma said. "I'm just not going to reward the behavior."

Republicans were nearly as quick to create a deadline extension that will go into effect as soon as there are enough Democrats to form a quorum, thus extending the life of dozens of bills temporarily killed by Democrats.

Along with RTW, an additional 22 other bills were also killed by the end of the day last Tuesday because of the walkout.

By week's end — the official deadline for the full House to vote on any bill — dozens more active bills were indefinitely tabled, including the entire state budget. In content, they ranged from contentious bills that would restrict abortion rights and take away funding from Planned Parenthood, to less divisive bills concerning storm water management.

As such, Democrats have been criticized for subverting the democratic process. But Bauer has pointed to a brief walkout by minority Republicans in 2001, and emphasized that RTW was never the only issue at stake. It was simply the last straw.

"(Right-to-Work) didn't start all this," he said. "This has been building from other radical changes, other attacks on workers." ■

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the All-ages art of Emma Overman

by: dan grossman

Childhood icons take on adult complexities in Emma Overman's latest solo exhibit, **CAROUSEL: A GILDED MEMORY OF LITERATURE, MOVIES AND ANIMAL CRACKERS**, opening March 4 at Harrison Center for the Arts.

It's hard to speak of visual artist Emma Overman without mentioning children. Her work abounds with iconic images transported from a familiar fairy tale or book into a painting where they often take on a unique, even quirky appeal. But they also acquire a decidedly adult emotional complexity.

"Emma's work is simple but complicated," says Joanna Taft, executive director of Harrison Center for the Arts. "I think to many it's like a naïve fairy tale but to others there's a dark side."

Like many, Taft is intrigued by the complexity of Overman's deceptively childlike work and admires the resulting ensemble. "She's able to pull polar opposites together until it becomes a cohesive show."

The Harrison Center hosts Overman's upcoming solo show, *Carousel: A Gilded Memory of Literature, Movies and Animal Crackers*, which opens First Friday on March 4.

Overman's work is increasingly familiar in Indianapolis. In addition to her solo shows at the Harrison and AV Framing Gallery, she's a 2009-2010 Creative Renewal Fellow. She's also illustrated four children's books, and her work was just published in *Edgycute*:

from *Neo-Pop to Low Brow and Back Again*, by Harry Saylor. Her paintings have been exhibited in numerous galleries nationwide since 2007 [see sidebar].

Taft isn't the only admirer of Overman's work. Among her many other fans is my six-year-old daughter, Naomi, who has accompanied me to the Harrison for my interview with the artist.

The Overman painting that my daughter Naomi is most familiar with is entitled "Loss" [see next page] (acrylic on canvas). In this painting, you see a ladybug looking up at a wide green sky as a single red balloon floats heavenward (probably thinking that it's another ladybug). A postcard-sized image of the work, in fact, hangs in my daughter's bedroom. One night, when putting her to bed, I asked her why she liked it.

My daughter replied, "I like it because it's funny and a little sad." Overman says that she considers this

painting, composed in 2005, to be one of her finest. "That was the first fluffy sky I ever did and people always seemed to like the fluffy sky where it's just a great big sky with a little something in the corner. I think that's the best sky I've ever painted."

"Loss" is an example of Overman's now dominant color palette: greenish and/or sepia tones throughout an entire composition. Sometimes there is only a dash of bright color —

say, a red rose held by a little girl — in an entire painting.

It's a radical change from her earlier work as illustrator of the children's picture book *Chumpkin*, (written by Lisa Funari Willever and Lorraine Funari, Franklin Mason Press, 2001), the story of a sad pumpkin.

In general, Overman used a much more colorful palette back then, and her characters had a distinctive visual personality, a far cry from her current style. "Chumpkin was my second book," says

Overman. "It's my favorite. My work has evolved quite a bit since, but I love the story and liked that the writer gave me freedom in creating the illustrations."

The highlight of the book's career thus far: Sitting atop the pile in a Christmas sleigh at the White House Christmas Tour.

Emotional content

It wouldn't be entirely wrong, considering Overman's child-friendly and fantastical imagery, to peg her as a children's illustrator. But upon second look, you might see that Overman's characters are not all based on the fantastical. Many of her paintings have an emotional element that seems to transcend the genre of children's illustration.

"Pig in the Woods" [see next page] portrays a classic Overman character, a pink pig with a red button for a nose, as a tear rolls down his cheek and holding a handkerchief. The pig is alone in the dark green woods with no one to comfort him.

A second painting, "Lift," features a ladybug crying while sitting on a branch — the tears are flowing down from her antennae — while a red beetle approaches with a handkerchief and butterflies flutter around.

"Painting is kind of like traveling."

— Emma Overman

The animals and little children Overman depicts — as well as her adult humanoid characters — convey complex emotions. But the emotional content wouldn't resonate without Overman's ability to depict what's going on in her head and heart on canvas with an extraordinarily confident line.

"People are always asking 'How did you get to this?'" says Overman, who was born in Sete Lagoas, Brazil and raised in Union City, Tenn. She spent hours of her childhood in "drawing time," an effective babysitting tool that took place of a sitter. "Instead of having a sitter they would cart me near where my dad worked and the lady that worked for him would be working at the table, just saying 'Draw a dog,' and that would keep me busy for hours."

Overman says that it wasn't until high school that she started toying with the idea of illustrating children's books, but was held back by her own inhibitions. "I didn't have a style for children's illustrating," Overman says. "This really didn't develop until after college, and it's greatly evolved over time."

College for Overman was undergrad work at Hanover College, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in 1997. She completed a post-baccalaureate program at the Maryland Institute College of Art a year later, where most of her time was focused on painting. "I was around other artists," Overman says of school. "I liked a little bit about what this person did and a little bit about what this person did. So it all had to simmer like a soup."

She didn't like taking part in anything she felt was extraneous to her painting while in art school. Rather than take in her Baltimore surroundings on field trip excursions, she preferred to paint the images she saw in her head.

"I didn't really have any particular style at all until about 1999," she notes. "And I really think it was around 2005 that my work improved. And that's when I met Michael."

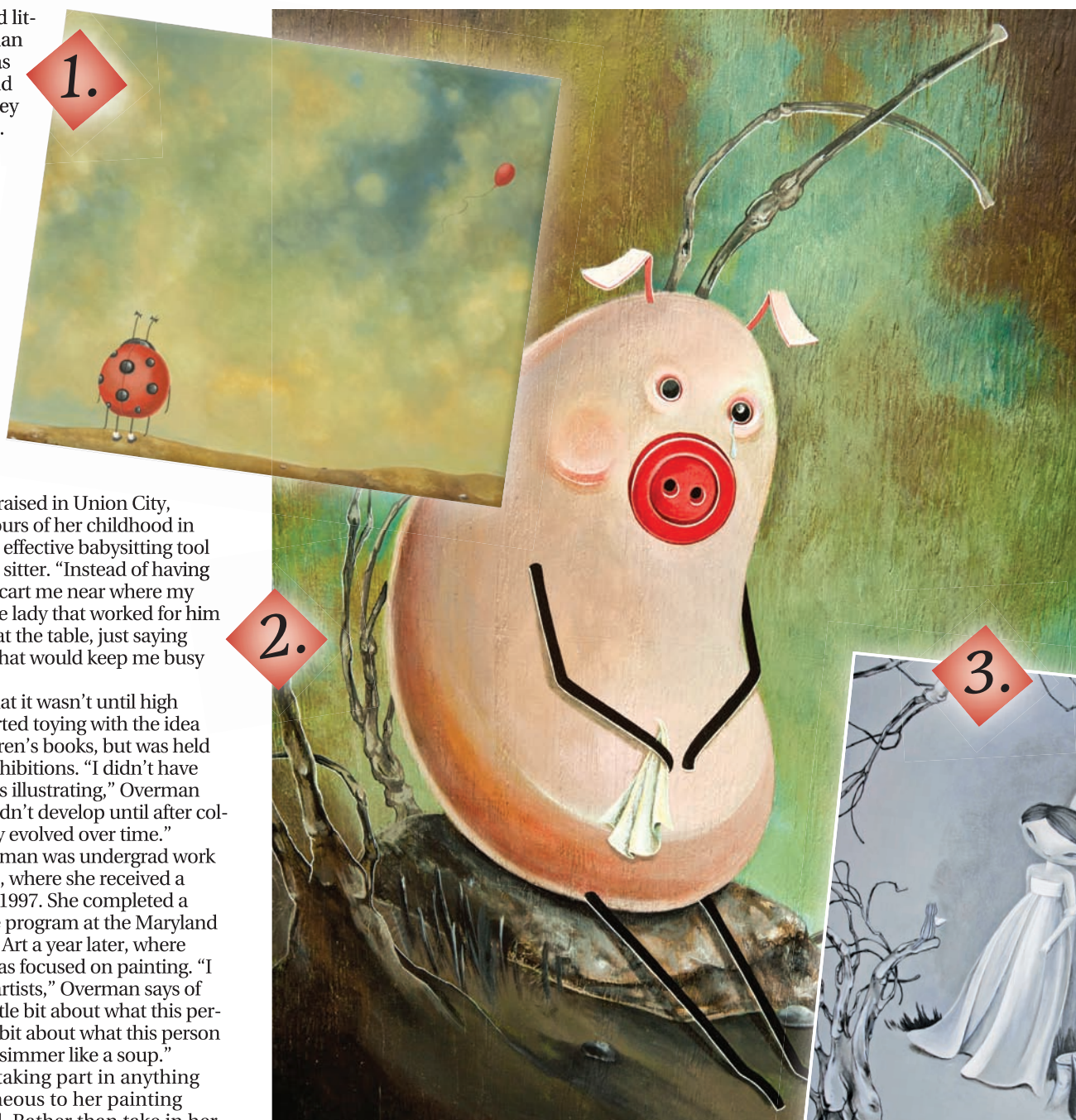
Fanciful evocation

While Overman takes my daughter on a tour of her studio, introducing her to some new characters she's created over the past several months, I sit down with her husband Michael Krisch. Hanging above us is a painting that was inspired by their marriage, entitled "A Woodland Wedding" [see 3].

In this fanciful evocation of Overman's 2009 wedding to Krisch, the mouthless, oval-faced bride and groom are set against a forest backdrop. The bald groom is resting his cheek against the bride's head while a chipmunk officiates the ceremony.

Despite the subdued tones of the composition, in black and white and shades of gray, it doesn't feel somber because the affection expressed between the two characters seems so strong.

I ask Krisch how they met. "I was living at Wheeler Arts at the time," he says. "She just walked into my studio one night for an art show." She showed him slides of her artwork



and it happened that he had tools that would help her frame her pictures and cut boards that she could paint on to her specifications.

Krisch showed her these tools hoping that she'd come back to use them so he could see more of her. One of these tools was a miter saw.

"She says we fell in love over the miter saw," Michael says.

Overman and Naomi come back into the part of the studio where we are sitting and she shows my daughter one of the recent sculptural pieces she's completed. It's a golf ball-sized ladybug that sits smug in the palm of her hand.

Recently, says Overman, she's been extraordinarily busy putting together her March 4 show. "I asked Michael the other day," she says, "I wonder in the last couple of weeks how many hours I've been working per week." He said, "Oh, seventy to eighty."

The end result may be Overman's best show yet. There will be paintings relating to the *Wizard of Oz*, *Heidi*, and to *Alice in Wonderland* — book and movie titles that colored her childhood. But she also has fond memories of certain brand names like Mr. Bubble, and

of course, Animal Crackers.

Of all the paintings that will appear in this show, the one that engages me the most is "A Journey with a Porpoise" [see 4] (acrylic on wood), a painting inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. In this painting you see a mock turtle driving a Model T with a porpoise in shotgun while an enormous yellow sun sits on the horizon behind them.

"My favorite character in *Alice in Wonderland* is the Mock Turtle," Overman says. "I like his use of language at one point... He says, 'If a fish were to tell me he was going on a journey I would

have to ask him, with what purpose?'"

Overman herself is embarking on several creative journeys after her Harrison show in March, and children are once again a central theme.

She's planning a children's book with Indianapolis writer Maurice Broaddus about a little girl and her imaginary friend, Invisible Dan, both of whom have made appearances in Overman's paintings.

"Painting is kind of like traveling," she says. "And you don't know exactly where you're going and then you have a goal and an idea of where you would like to be. But when you set out on a trip you don't know what restaurant you're going to find or if you're going to get a flat tire... If you know exactly where you're going before you get there, what's the point in going?" ■

* See page 12 for more First Friday information and a list of Overman's upcoming exhibits.

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The ATTIC EXPRESS
and Other Macabre Stories
By Alex Hamilton
Ashtree Press, 2007.
Reviewed by Georg W. Geib

Alex Hamilton is one of Britain's foremost authors of stories of dark fiction. This volume brings together two of his earlier anthologies plus three more recent pieces. All share his macabre outlook, placing characters at the gruesome boundaries between the routine and the fantastic. Again and again seemingly normal situations spiral out of control as accepted, conventional responses prove worthless in the face of the ghastly and the unforeseen. Much of Hamilton's strength lies in his power to evoke seemingly normal human settings.

A very British author, he delights in public school and university settings, in lazy summer holidays, crowded London theatres and daily routines of home and work. Yet each time he introduces the grim, irrational or supernatural in plausible and disturbing ways. His title story is among the best, as a father builds a model train layout for an unappreciative child whose fantasies about rail yards become very real and lethal.

The book is an Ashtree imprint, a Canadian small press that specializes in limited editions of books in the tradition of the great ghost story writer, M. R. James. The publisher made the good decision to use the artistic talents of Keith Minnion, a master of dark fantasy, on their cover. Hamilton's tales, and the full Ashtree list, deserve your attention if like a good tale of evil spirits.

—George W. Geib is Professor of History at Butler University.

Go to www.butler.edu/BookReview for more recommendations by the faculty and staff of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Butler University.



FIRST FRIDAY

Emma Overman's show at the Harrison is just one of many exhibits opening Friday, March 4. Throughout the year, on the first Friday of each month, numerous galleries open up simultaneously, transforming the city into a thriving festival of art, camaraderie and free food and drinks. Everyone comes out to see the art and each other. Kids are welcome in many of the galleries — the Harrison and the Murphy building most of all.

See our Go & Do section for some editors' picks of a couple First Friday openings, and also our Arts feature this week on an opening at StutzArtSpace.

First Friday is a creation of IDADA (Indianapolis Downtown Artists and Dealers Association); you can visit them at www.idada.org or in person at their Gallery 924 space (see Go & Do). When searching for First Friday events on the nuvo.net site, select the date of First Friday, then hit go. This month, for example, we have almost 20 openings listed.

As always, we encourage this journey to be made on a bicycle. If you're travelling from afar, toss your bike into your car, then establish a home base, whether in Fountain Square, along Mass Ave or at the Harrison Center. Then ride (use your lights, of course, and wear a helmet!) from gallery to gallery.

Generally, things kick off at 6 p.m. and go, officially, until 9 or 10 p.m. But you'll find parties along the way, and you might find yourself in some unexpected places, say the Wheeler building or a restaurant you've never been to before.

— JIM POYSER



This gingerbread man sits on the wall in Overman's studio.

Upcoming Indianapolis exhibits:

- **Carousel**
Harrison Center for the Arts
1505 N. Delaware St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
March 4, 6 - 10 p.m.
Exhibit runs through March
www.harrisoncenter.org
- **2009 - 2010 Creative Renewal Fellows Exhibition**
Indianapolis Art Center
820 E. 67th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
April 15 - June 5

Overman's current exhibits:

- **C.A.V.E. Gallery**
507 Rose Ave.
Venice, CA 90291
www.cavegallery.net
- **Rivet Gallery**
1200 North High St.
Columbus, OH 43201
www.rivetart.com
- **Orbit Gallery**
Limelight Marketplace
656 Sixth Ave.
New York, NY
- **Art Whino**
122 Waterfront St.
National Harbor, MD 20745
www.artwhino.com
- **Harbour Spa and Salon**
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Find out more at www.emmaoverman.com



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5 SATURDAY PARTY

Carnaval at Jazz Kitchen

If you are craving a healthy dose of samba, the **Brazilian Carnaval party**, brought to you by the **Cultural Cannibals**, will be just the thing to spice up your

life. This year's event boasts entertainment including a live Brazilian samba band, The IU Brazilian Ensemble; the Flores do Samba dance group and an exhibition of photos and videos featuring Artur Silva's images from Rio de Janeiro. Food for the event will remain true to the flavor of Brazil, and Brazilian beers, juices, and soft drinks will also be available. The fiesta runs 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. at the **Jazz Kitchen**, 5377 N. College Ave. Tickets are \$10 for students & seniors, \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Call 488-8558 or 253-9900 or visit www.culturalcannibals.com for more information. ■

SUBMITTED PHOTO



SUBMITTED PHOTO

At Garvey | Simon, work by David Morrison (above) and Donald Mee is on view starting Wednesday.

2 WEDNESDAY VISUAL ART



Nature Transformed

The imperfection of man, the living conditions of man and nature—**David Morrison** and **Donald Mee**'s new exhibition, **Nature Transformed** at the **Garvey | Simon Art Access, LLC** will be both an art exhibit and lesson in nature. Morrison's works consist of leaves and bark drawn against white backgrounds with an amazing amount of detail, and Mee's furniture pieces are functional and rustic, embracing the imperfections of the wood. The exhibition runs from March 2 to April 16 at the Garvey | Simon Art Access, 27 E. Main St., Carmel. For more information, call 844-7278 or visit www.garvey-simon-art-access.com. ■

2 WEDNESDAY THEATER

As You Like It at Butler

Find love in the Forest of Arden in William Shakespeare's comedy, **As You Like It**. The play is famous for gender reversals and the monologue, "All the world's a stage." The description of the themes of love, aging, the natural world and death make this piece evergreen. The only thing to ask is, "Can one desire too much of a good thing?" This production is directed by **Tim Hardy**, a Christel DeHaan Visiting International Theatre Artist. The performance will run from March 2-6 in the **Lilly Hall Studio Theatre 168 at Butler University**. The show begins at 8 p.m. on March 2-5 and at 2 p.m. on March 5 and 6. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. For more information call 317-940-9247 or visit www.butler.edu/theatre. See nuvo.net for a feature on Tim Hardy. ■

3 THURSDAY ENVIRONMENT

Keeping the Bees

More bees, please. **Butler Campus Farm** and the **Center for Urban Ecology** have joined together to bring Top-Bar beekeeping expert **Charlie Koenen** to Butler University's campus. Koenen will share his expertise with the crowd, along with the ecological importance of bees. All levels of beekeepers are welcome at the event, from the novice to the expert. While free, spots at this event are limited. Email Jordan Burt at jburt07@gmail.com to RSVP. The event runs from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and will be held in **Butler University's Gallahue Hall**. Visit www.butlercampusfarm.com for more information. ■



3 THURSDAY DANCE

DK's Passionate Puccini

Dance Kaleidoscope's Passionate Puccini opens this Thursday at the **Indiana Repertory Theatre**. A romantic ambiance is sure to be in store for all those in attendance as the dancers from DK twirl gracefully to the arias of Puccini. The particular gem of the evening is sure to be "Butterfly," a piece performed by multiple couples to the love duet from *Madama Butterfly*. The performance begins Thursday at 12 p.m. for only \$6 at the IRT. Other performances are Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets range from \$25 to \$37 for the other performances. For tickets or more information, call 940-6555 or visit www.dancekal.org. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Passionate Puccini opens Thursday at the IRT.



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GO&DO

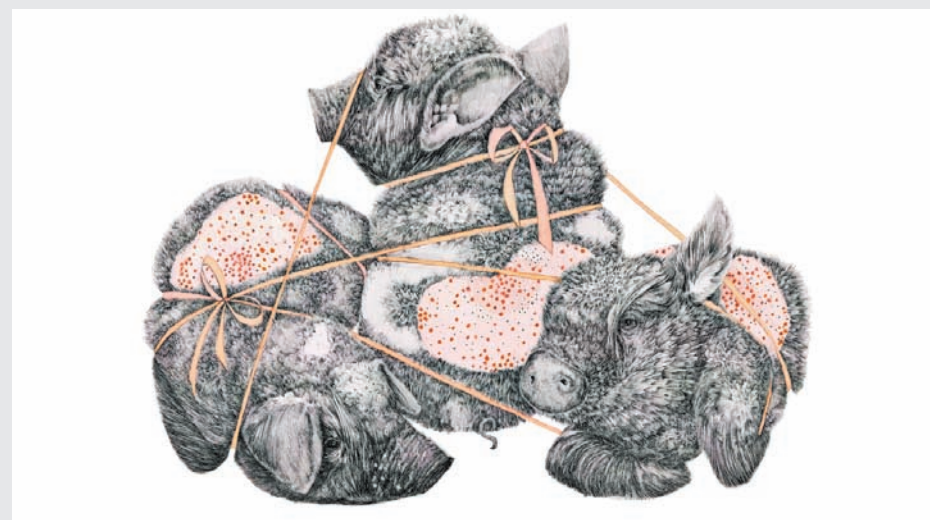
4 FRIDAY
VISUAL ARTS

IDADA's First in Line

Time to go support the art community of Naptown. For its fifth year in a row, **Indianapolis Downtown Artists and Dealers Association** is hosting the **First in Line Exhibition and Sale** to raise



money for the general operating funds of IDADA, which keeps Indy's pretty amazing arts community alive. Local artists are donating their works of art (any medium they prefer) and all works will be priced at an even \$100. Smile for a picture with your work after you buy it, and be entered in a prize drawing if you buy as well. The event will be held March 4 from 6-10 p.m. at the **Indy Indie Artists Colony**, 26 E. 14th St. An IDADA members' only social hour will be held from 5-6 p.m. See nuvo.net for a feature on the event. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

"Fam Farm" is the name of the exhibit of work by Jillian Ludwig at Wug's.

4 FRIDAY
VISUAL ARTS
**Jillian Ludwig
at Wug's**



wUG LAKU'S STUDIO & gARAGE
hosts **Jillian Ludwig's** opening reception at 6 p.m. On display will be **Fam**

Farm, a collection of drawings that recall the modern use of "genetic modification, factory farming as well as deceitful packaging and misguided labeling results in confusion and a disconnection between customer and the source of their food." She playfully expresses the loss of natural farming in our culture with detailed drawings, both whimsical and horrifying. For more information call 317-270-8258 or visit www.wlsandg.com. Part of IDADA's First Friday event. ■

4 FRIDAY
LECTURE
**Bettany
Hughes'
Hemlock Cup**



Bettany Hughes, a world-renowned historian and author, is breathing new life into the study of ancient Greece. In her latest book, *The Hemlock Cup: Socrates, Athens and the Search for the Good Life*, Hughes explores the relevancy Socrates had during his own times - and the last-

ing impact he has today - against the backdrop of the pressing social, political, economic, literary and military realities of society. Hughes will discuss her findings in a lecture titled **Helen of Troy: Princess, Whore, and How to Write the Biography of a Hole**. The event takes place in **Butler University's Johnson Room**, located in Robertson Hall, 4600 Sunset Avenue. The lecture is free and starts at 3 p.m. Call 940-9480 for more information or visit www.butler.edu. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Author Bettany Hughes visits Indy on Friday.

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6 SUNDAY MUSIC

Voices of Youth

The **Indianapolis Children's Choir** is departing from their typical classical fare by teaming up with alum and now accomplished musician Sarah Scharbrough for **Voices of Youth: Broadway, Jazz & More**, the ICC's spring concert that will feature jazz selections like "Moonglow" and "Birdland," and Broadway hits like "I Dreamed a Dream" and "Route 66." There will be two shows, one at 3 p.m. with the high school ensemble and one at 7 p.m. with the advanced choirs. Both performances will be held March 6 at the **Hilbert Circle Theatre**, 45 Monument Circle. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$13 at the door. For more information and tickets, call 940-9640 or visit www.icchoir.org. ■



Sarah Scharbrough joins the ICC.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

6 SUNDAY MUSIC

Grace Fong+Hubby

A dynamic duo is hitting the stage. In the first concert of the **2011 Grand Encounters piano recital series**, **Grace Fong** and husband **Jun Iwasaki** take the spotlight. Not only will attendees have the pleasure of listening to the music produced by the two, but their karma will also receive a welcome boost - proceeds from the event support American classical and jazz pianists as well as free arts outreach programs in central Indiana schools, nursing homes and community centers. The event takes



Grace Fong and Jun Iwasaki perform at the IHS.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

place at the **Indiana History Center**, 450 W. Ohio Street, 3:30 p.m. Visit www.americanpianists.org or call (317) 940-9945 for more information. ■

7 MONDAY LECTURE

Sounds of the Elephant

The next lecture in the 2010-2011 **J. James Woods Lectures in the Science and Mathematics** will feature **Katy Payne**. Fascinated by the calls of elephants, Payne began her research career listening to them. Her commitment to understanding the social calls of elephants led to the founding of the organization the Elephant Listening Project, associated with Cornell University. With the help of colleagues and the use of acoustic methods, she is able to study and aid in the conservation of forest elephants in Central Africa. Her studies have shown that elephants often communicate with sounds that travel over vast distances, below the threshold of human hearing. The lecture will be held in



Katy Payne listens to elephants. Come hear what she has to say on Monday.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

the **Atherton Union Reilly Room** at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call 940-6505 or visit www.butler.edu. See nuvo.net for an extended interview with Katy Payne. ■



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Andy Chen's "Social Currency"

New Stutz exhibit explores photo sharing, Facebook

BY DAN GROSSMAN
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

In Andy Chen's nature photography you might sense an intuitive knowledge of another plane of reality—a spiritual realm, perhaps — overlaying our own. The sci-fi/fantasy novels of Charles de Lint, of which Chen is an avid fan, are set partly in such a world. But in many respects the existence of such a shadow world isn't a fantasy at all, although it would be a stretch to define it in spiritual terms. Entering into this world is a daily reality, in fact, for anyone who spends any amount of time on the Internet.

Social Currency, the show that Chen is curating at StutzArtSpace opening Friday, March 4, deals with the interaction of our physical world and of the World Wide Web; more specifically it focuses on the effect of social media on photography in the Internet age.

Chen graduated Purdue University with a degree in Computer Engineering in 1996. Four years later, he started a successful dot-com. While he's moved on to a career as a full-time photographer, Chen still spends a lot of time in the digital world, blogging, maintaining his website and communicating with friends and family.

I met up recently with Chen and we talked in his study on the second floor of his northside residence in which he lives with his wife Hannah and two-year-old daughter, Ruby. We started off by Chen talking about the upcoming *Social Currency* show.

CHEN: I wanted to get involved in all this social media stuff going on that's having an impact on basically how photography is viewed. Some people call Facebook a glorified photo-sharing site. But then if you look at photography as a medium, it's really had much more of a social aspect than some of the other mediums. It's part of people's everyday lives and we use it to document vacations and significant milestones like birthdays...senior pictures... so those things have always served as a kind of social currency when you exchange them and show them to your friends and family... it has an impact on how you relate to people and how you share your life, maybe even how you want to establish your reputation especially like when you keep giving a senior picture to somebody. You're really trying to make a mark [to establish that] this is my identity. And now that's really moved online. It's really



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A self-portrait by Andy Chen.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

"Wish you were here" by Matt Sommers.

a great time to explore the progression of how photographs are used as social currency. So that was the idea for the show.

NUVO: Can you talk about some of the other artists and their work for this show?

CHEN: Matt Sommers is making postcards for fictional tourist attractions. So his piece is actually going to be a postcard spinner. And I really love it because of the aspect of sharing your travels. Holly Sommers' piece is going to be like a mobile. And then Ron Kern's piece is about portraiture. So it's going to be a multi-paneled thing and each panel will have some vintage Victorian images all the way up to a portrait of himself.

NUVO: What are you looking for when you put together these photographers? How do they complement one another?

CHEN: Really, what I'm looking for is how they explore different aspects of the social currency theme and so portraiture was certainly one I wanted to capture. Ginny Taylor Rosner's pieces are more about this transition into the online world; and so one of her pieces is actually going to be this photo album. Both of her pieces are books. And if you think of the [typical] family photo album with the cling static pages where you have pictures with



SUBMITTED PHOTO

"Food" by Holly Sommers.

the handwritten captions, but rather than pictures she's going to put CDs in them. I'm really pleased that it came out that several pieces in the show aren't traditional framed photographs on the wall.

NUVO: You're having the show at StutzArtSpace. What's your history with the Stutz?

CHEN: I moved into the Stutz with my studio two years ago. I think last fall they were starting to look for shows for next year. So I had this idea and I proposed it and they were like 'Oh yeah, let's do it.' So that's how it came about. And then in January, I became the director of the StutzArtSpace Gallery.

NUVO: In your previous work you have natural settings, spaces devoid of people — a beam of sunlight entering a clearing for example — and there might be a symbolic content in that work. I guess I don't see a connection between that work and your upcoming show. Is there a connection there, though? Something that I'm missing?

CHEN: Well, regarding the work you've seen before: I've always been interested in notions of story and journey. And especially since I've had a kid, the expression of how do you capture someone in images I've been more intrigued with

and so of course I've been taking lots of pictures of my kid. And I think even especially after having Ruby I haven't been able to go backpacking as much and I've been spending more time in the city. And so a lot of the project ideas that I have coming up are actually more oriented around the city or with people.

NUVO: Before you were a full-time photographer, you developed software?

CHEN: Yeah. I have a computer engineering degree from Purdue (1996). Right when I got out of school I worked for a consulting company for a few years. And then a friend of mine and I started a dot-com in 2000. It was called Quobix. And we had that company for five years, until 2005. We made collaboration software that ran on the Web. We deployed it ourselves for people to use for software development. Then another startup actually liked our platform and built their whole business off of it. That other company's called InnoCentive. We basically ran their technology side for several years... So I still do some part-time software development, but now most of my time is spent on the art side. This show is really a combination between all my background on the social aspect of the Internet and photography and I'm really excited to be able to bring them together.

NUVO: In addition to you and your family, a number of other people live in your house including a single mom and her three-year-old daughter. On the first floor there's community living space. Does the physical space you live in, as well as your notions of Internet community and culture, have some effect on this show?

CHEN: A number of different people have lived here over the five-and-a-half years that I've had the house. It's not a traditional living situation. So people are attracted here or have some time of interest to live with other people. I certainly had my reasons. I think everyone here now is really distant from their immediate family or they don't live close to their immediate family. So we have kind of a family feel to the house... we celebrate holidays together. We help each other through struggles and conflict. We've also had a numbers of guys going through divorces staying here for a few months just trying to sort out where they're going to next. That's something that I'm thinking about, how people are connected. And that's something that's important to me in this exhibit is how people connect to each other in their lives. ■



WHAT: Social Currency, fine art photography exhibition

WHERE: StutzArtSpace, 212 W. 10th St., Indianapolis; please enter from 10th St., via Bearcat Alley.

WHEN: Friday, March 4, at noon; opening reception from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Exhibition open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or by appointment through March 25.

INFO: Free. For more on Andy Chen: www.whatandysaw.com

A&E REVIEWS

DANCE

BUTLER BALLET MIDWINTER DANCE FESTIVAL

★★★☆☆

Clowes Memorial Hall of Butler University, Feb. 25-26. Balanchine's "Walpurgisnacht Ballet" from Gounod's *Faust* features 24 female dancers in shades of purple as wandering souls on the prowl for May Day revelry. One male dancer is ensnared into their hair-down, ripped costume, wild leaping and flailing finale. Deborah Wingert served as the Repetiteur for the Trust, which maintains the standards of Balanchine's choreography. Experiencing Balanchine's works in Indiana grows from the 2006 appointment of Michael Vernon as head of the Ballet Department of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and founding of the Indianapolis School of Ballet soon thereafter. The program included Marek Cholewa's restaging of the Grand Pas de Deux from Chiaboukiani's *La Bayadere*. Susan McGuire choreographed "Church Song" to traditional Indonesian music as a 4-part modern dance work depicting aspects of life and emotional interactions. "1st of 3 in 17" by Cynthia Pratt to music by Mozart is fast-paced with free-flowing sinewy lines and groupings. "Karelia Suite," choreographed by Stephan Laurent to music by Jan Sibelius, reflects the folklore and traditions of Finland. "Hong," choreographed by Tong Wang to Mongolian folk songs, is a richly textured retelling of the return of swan geese to their home from their winter migration place. The leads and corps dancers excel in minute footwork, hand and arm gestures and body extensions and contractions to emulate the grace, beauty and delicacy — yet strength — of the birds.

— RITA KOHN

DANCE

BROADWAY GOES LATIN

★★★★★

Presented by IntoSalsa Dance Company with Cultural Explosion [and Chicago Latin Street Dance Company dancers], Pike Performing Arts Center, Feb. 26. Exuding energy, glitz, elegance, humor, pure pleasure, this is the kind of program to bring non-believers to embrace dance. Choreographers/dancers/teachers Juan Calderon and Christina Piedra founded New Jersey-based Cultural Explosion 15 years ago to teach salsa. Five years ago they started a touring company to show what selected Hollywood and Broadway musicals would be like if they incorporated Latin dancing including salsa, mambo, flamenco, merengue, bolero, Latin hustle, Latin jazz, cha-cha-cha and rueda. The standout was the modern and contemporary bolero choreography and dancing by Bellasmin Aquine and Ivan Taylor set on "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" as a tribute to *Lion King*. Smart choreography, electrifying footwork, on-the mark lighting and costumes, and a merger of three Latin dance companies filled the stage with production number "tributes" to *West Side Story*, *Lion King*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Sound of Music* (yes, "My Favorite Things" to a Mambo beat), *Sweet Charity*, *Singing in the Rain* (softshoe up scaled to salsa footwork and Afro-Cuban), *Chicago* (upping the sizzle for "All That Jazz") and *Grease*



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Work by Nhat Tran is on view at Wabash College through April 8.

7-man cha-cha-cha footwork and macho exuberance brought a roar from the already "into it" audience. Bravo to IntoSalsa's Erin Lamb and Yang Xiao for bringing Cultural Explosion to Indianapolis and reaching out to other Midwest salsa companies.

— RITA KOHN

MUSIC

ANDREA MARCOVICCI

★★★☆☆

The Cabaret At the Columbia Club; Feb. 26. Andrea Marcovici is a cabaret legend, an artist who has held court in the Algonquin Hotel's storied Oak Room for over 20 years. So her arrival for two nights of performances at downtown's Cabaret At the Columbia Club, as well as a Saturday afternoon workshop, was a coup. But for the uninitiated among us, Ms. Marcovici seemed, at first, a decidedly acquired taste. For one thing, the woman has a vibrato that would make a mourning dove blush. Her vocal chops are not subtle and her interpretive skills tend to aim over the top. But Marcovici's show, an anthology of songs derived from movie history, was smartly literate throughout and the joy she communicated for her audience, and for that extraordinary room, created a magic of its own. Her treatment of the less sentimental songs on her set list, like "Hamlet," made famous in 1949 by Betty Hutton, was dexterously witty and her conflation of "The Way We Were," with "Thanks For the Memories," demonstrated her gift for creative reinvention. By the time she was done, Marcovici had staked a memorable claim.

— DAVID HOPPE

MUSIC

ENSEMBLE MUSIC'S SCHUBERT TRIOS

★★★☆☆

Ensemble Music Series; Indiana History Center; Feb. 24. "Heavenly length" is what is usually reserved to describe Franz Schubert's "Great" C-Major Symphony, D. 944. But that term can readily be applied to a large number of the Austrian Classical/Romantic composer's prodigious instrumental output from the 1820s, including his piano trios. Duo performers David Finckel, cellist, and Wu Han, pianist,

joined with violinist Philip Setzer in offering Schubert's two piano trios this Wednesday. The first, Trio in B-flat, D. 898 (1827), is the most immediately accessible of the two, filled with tunes, jaunty and utterly lovely — overlaying a complex structure filled with abrupt key shifts and repetitively rhythmic, left-hand piano support. The succeeding Trio in E-flat, D. 929 (1827), brings its complex structure more to the forefront while somewhat submerging its melodies, of which, still, there are plenty. Most ear-catching is the march tune from the second movement, shared throughout among the three instruments. It's then reprised twice in the Finale, supported with bewitching piano chords skipping down the keyboard. That both trios fully engaged the large IHC Basile Theater audience was quite evident. Our performers got standing ovations, at both the break and the end. The Finckel – Han duo team are without question a top-tiered twosome. Han's keyboard work — her phrasing, articulation and dynamic control — were second to none in both these works. Finckel made his cello a living, breathing instrument, with breathtaking tonal control and an instinctive ensemble sense. In fact, all three players conveyed a consummate knowledge of these long, challengingly difficult works as they blended their parts together — and made them "sing." For more review details, visit www.nuvo.net.

— TOM ALDRIDGE

MUSIC

AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND FILM

★★★★☆

Frank & Katrina Basile Opera Center, Feb. 24. Academy Award winning actress Celeste Holm was the lifetime achievement honoree on Feb. 24, at the Indianapolis Opera and Truly Moving Pictures gala but it turned out she honored attendees with her grace, wit, charm and enduring talent. At age 93 she remains alluring with sparkling eyes and a smile to light up a roomful of people. The encore of a music-filled program was her heartwarming rendition of "Getting to Know You," inviting the audience to join with her, since it was her joy to get know us. The backstory of how and why New York City-born, University of Chicago educated, and Broadway, Hollywood and television star Holm came to Indianapolis revolves around Frank Basile. Actually, two

Frank Basile. One who lives in Indianapolis, is married to Katrina and is a philanthropist. The other lives in New York City, is married to Celeste Holm and is a bass-baritone who appears in grand opera and concert stages worldwide. This Basile graduated from the Indiana University [Jacobs] School of Music, so it was a homecoming with the intention of "helping opera grow in Indianapolis." A mix-up of emails led the two Basiles to meet in New York City, and the rest is our good luck. The event included a program of operatic arias and songs from Italy and the American musical theatre by Basile, with accompanist David Lewis; and two duets by Indianapolis Opera Ensemble members, soprano Jacqueline Brecheen and mezzo Kristin Gornstein, and tenor Daniel Anderson and baritone Thomas Gunther, with accompanist Dana Sadava. Also honored was Kate Appel, who was presented the 2011 Indy Woman of the Arts award by Bonnie Reilly, the awards 2005 recipient.

— RITA KOHN

MUSIC

ISO CLASSICAL SERIES PROGRAM NO. 10

★★★☆☆

Hilbert Circle Theatre; Feb. 25-26. Jean-Yves Thibaudet may, in one way, be a 21st-century Liszt. As many are aware, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was a larger-than-life figure in the 19th century, then considered *the* supreme pianist of his time as well as a prolific composer. Thibaudet appears to be carrying Liszt's pianistic gauntlet into this century. His prowess was well demonstrated at Friday's Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra concert, wherein Thibaudet performed Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat and his *Totentanz* ("Dance of Death") for Piano and Orchestra. ISO guest conductor Ludovic Morlot opened with the quite contrasting Beethoven Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 ("Pastorale"). Beethoven's cheerfully "rustic" work received a fast-paced reading from Morlot, except for its third movement: "Merry assembly of country folk," a.k.a. the Scherzo. The remaining movements, aside from being more convincingly paced, nonetheless displayed a few rough spots, failing to show the orchestra at its best. With the Liszt E-flat Concerto, Thibaudet attacked his opening passages like bolts of lightning, showing astonishing finger work in his cascading octaves, his passage figurations, his two-hand trills—all tossed off with seemingly little effort. Yet Thibaudet took some passages at a runaway tempo, causing us to miss some of Liszt's delicate moments. By contrast, Liszt fails to offer anything much beyond mere technical display in his *Totentanz*. A set of variations on the "Dies Irae" theme from the 12th century, Thibaudet unleashed his fingers into a kaleidoscope of technical devices reaching the limit of a pianist's capability. The musical emptiness of the writing reduced my appreciation of what his fingers could do. For more review details, visit www.nuvo.net.

— TOM ALDRIDGE

THEATER

DIASPORA

★★☆☆☆

Half/Black Productions at the IndyFringe Theatre; directed by Michael Hosp. "Shadows were my spotlight...I can't hold my liquor,

A&E REVIEWS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Work by Thornton Dial is on view at the IMA through Sept. 18.

but I can hold my breath...It brought tears to the eye of the storm...It was the bridge from here to now." These are the hip hop musings of poet Saul Williams' *The Dead Emcee Scrolls*, inspired by a manuscript he found rolled up in a graffiti artist's spray can. Through his one-hour theatrical adaptation of William's poetry, director Michael Hosp asks us to consider if these are the ramblings of a drunken schizophrenic or the visions of a prophet. Dressed in a hooded sweatshirt and torn overcoat, actor Jonah D. Winston looks the part of homeless wanderer, but the performance is all mood and hysterics, laughing and crying. Like the poetry, even when it is funny or thought-provoking, it does little to establish character, story or the kind of emotion that is felt more than heard. Through March 13. 317-721-9458; www.indyfringe.org.

— JOSEFA BEYER

VISUAL ART

HARD TRUTHS: THE ART OF THORNTON DIAL

★★★★★
Indianapolis Museum of Art; through Sept. 18. This maximal show, consisting of 70 works created over a period of 20 years, gives real meaning to the term "body of work." Dial is an artist who seems compelled to see just how much meaning a work of art can hold, to make art so fully of its time and place that traditional two-dimensional boundaries aren't enough. Thus a piece from 1992, "The Last Day of Martin Luther King," includes wood, carpet, wire screen, metal pans, broken glass, mop cords, cloth, string and enamel. This insistence on inclusion – the need to get everything in and, even more, to get it right — invests virtually all the pieces on view with an electrifying physicality. Each of the seven galleries in this exhibition opens like an embrace. Dial, who was born in Alabama in 1928, and spent most of his life working as a welder for the Pullman Standard railroad car company, has a bone-deep gift for metaphor. Throughout this show, brilliantly orchestrated into a series of interlocking themes reflecting Dial's rural past, the plight of the city, troubled times in the larger world, as well as Dial's creative spirit and spirituality, by curator Joanne Cubbs, we find an artist who is not only profoundly reflective, but whose experience of the world continually causes him to seek larger contexts, a meaning beyond himself, and a connection to community that is simultaneously grounded in political awareness and cosmic appreciation. A wry,

sideways humor also infuses this work, as in "Driving To the End of the World," a five-piece sequence assembled from rusted auto parts, or "Shade Tree Comfort," an assemblage of scrap metal, barbed wire and treebranches that achieves a brutal honesty. A gallery devoted solely to Dial's drawing, an array of primarily female figures with gravity-defying heads and sinuous, dancing bodies, is an added, joyful revelation. This show, which will tour to other cities following its closure here on Sept. 18, is another in a lengthening string of hits by the IMA. It's cause for celebration. Go to www.imamuseum.org for information.

— DAVID HOPPE

VISUAL ART

"UNVEILED LAYERS:" THE ART OF NHAT TRAN

★★★★★
Eric Dean Gallery, Randolph H. Deer Fine Arts Wing, Wabash College, 410 Wabash Ave., Crawfordsville; through April 8. An aura of lightness envelopes Nhat Tran's new work created during and following her recent study of Japanese urushi at Tokyo University of Arts. Five sculptures of layered lacquer upon molded cloth represent Tran's re-interpretation of Urushi Kanshitsu. "Experiment in Verification/Experiment in Falsification," (2011) a dual wall hanging of floating blues on copper/copper with blue, takes her work into an even freer dimension from her installation at the Indianapolis Airport and her signature "Carpe Momentum" (2002). "Unrelated Existence" and "Primitive Invitation," small sculpted layers of lacquer on fabric mounted on pedestals, also emulate weightlessness. "Rabbiting" (2011) with golds on fabric conjures hopping in contrast with her "Inclination to Believe" (2004) urushi on extruded polystyrene work with its feel of drawing into itself a rainbow spectrum. Tran's 2010 series of urushi lacquer on wooden board placed free floating within frames equally allows imagery of movement. "Evolution of Unconsciousness" at first glance seems dark and forbidding, but a second look draws you into its smooth surface like looking into a deep pool with faces emerging and bodies floating. "A Nonsensical Affection" equally requires careful inspection. Following along its copper layerings from left to right, there is a conjuring of action — perhaps a leopard leaping toward a sunlit pool? "Secretly" is a bright enigmatic rainbow splash. These newest pieces are surrounded by a retrospective of Tran's work since 2002, offering an evolution of her constant search for new expressions within an ancient technique. Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

—RITA KOHN

Also on exhibit at Wabash's Eric Dean Gallery; Orie Shafer's colorful, energy-filled hybrid paintings combine digital technology with the materials and methodology of traditional art. Shafer's abstract work has a sense of landscape. His initial complex images originate as small glimpses from digital macro photographs, which provide the matrix for freehand application of oils, colored pencils and oil pastels. These small hybrid paintings are then redigitized for enlargement and overpainting again and again to produce large scale canvases. — RK

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Indiana's first Indonesian fare

Garuda opens March 8

BY DAVID HOPPE
DHOPPE@NUVO.NET

Today, if you visit the Netherlands, you'll find Indonesian restaurants aplenty. In fact, it's in cities like Amsterdam where most Americans try Indonesian cooking for the first time. That's because this delicious cuisine has yet to catch on in the States, which is mystifying since the Indonesians combine flavors associated with such already imported favorites as Thai, Indian and Vietnamese.

Lucky for Indianapolis, then, that Dutch transplant and restaurateur Peter Oomkes, along with his son Helger, has opened Garuda, its name referring to Indonesia's great winged national symbol, at the intersection of 52nd St. and College Ave. Word has it Garuda is the first — and only — Indonesian restaurant in the state of Indiana.

Although Garuda doesn't officially open for fulltime business until Tuesday, March 8, it's been serving customers buffet-style meals on Sunday afternoons in a series of "soft openings." From the look of things on

the day we visited, customer response has been tremendous. Diners packed the cozy space, helping themselves to a variety of savory dishes for the unbeatable price of \$8.

We started by trying the two soups on offer. The first was made with carrots pureed to a velvety consistency and cut with a hint of coconut. It struck a nice balance between being rich and refreshing. The other soup was a variant on chicken noodle. It was loaded with finely shredded meat and vegetables, but it substituted thin glass noodles for pasta and added cumin to provide a hint of afterburn.

Then we filled our plates. There were several dishes to choose from and, under the circumstances, we tried them all, beginning with Lumpia, a large Indonesian spring roll stuffed with chicken or tofu and sautéed mixed vegetables. The rolls are pan-fried and can be dipped in sweet and tangy peanut sauce or in a pineapple chili sauce.

Other dishes included Rendang with tender bits of lamb slow-roasted in coconut milk, chilis and lemongrass for a flavor reminiscent of a Thai green curry.

Laksa consisted of bite-size chunks of chicken sautéed with garlic and shallots in chicken stock and served over a bed of glass noodles.

There were three kinds of Satay, or kebabs — beef, chicken and vegetable. The beef and vegetable were particularly good. The beef was meltingly tender and prepared in a sweet barbecue sauce. The veg-

etable version featured grilled red onion, yellow squash and zucchini.

The Kubis Kalapa Salad was a truly original kind of slaw, with thick shreds of cabbage mixed with cucumbers, carrots and bits of fresh apple tossed with coconut milk and a trace of peanut sauce. It provided a bright counterweight to the other, richer, dishes.

Krupuk, a translucent, crispy shrimp cracker, was served as a side, and tables were outfitted with caddies bearing jars with hot and sweet chili sauces for diners who wanted a little extra hit.

Dessert consisted of tasty slices of fried plantain served with a frosty coconut ice cream and chocolate sauce — a great finish.

Everything we tried at Garuda put flavor first. Spices were abundant and used with authority — but in service to the creation of a rich and satisfying taste experience. These were seemingly simple dishes prepared with a high degree of sophistication.

Owner Oomkes says that when Garuda opens on a fulltime basis next week, the buffet selections will vary, and dinner will be offered from a full menu at a higher price point. A license to serve beer and wine is in the works and should be available soon. And there are plans in the works to allow for additional dining space to accommodate what promises to be a growing clientele. ■



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

This splendor from the \$8 buffet includes Beef Satay, Worter Soup, Rendang, rice and hot chai.

Garuda

653 E. 52nd St.
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CULINARY PICKS



SAP TO SYRUP DAY — SATURDAY

Maple sap turns into delicious maple syrup. On March 5, you can learn how sap turns into syrup — as well as how the Native Americans collected sap and how the pioneers turned it into syrup. You can try to drill a tap-hole and create a maple souvenir to take away. The events will be at Holliday Park (6363 Spring Mill Road) and Southeastway Park (5624 South Carroll Road) Saturday, March 5. Hours are 9-11 a.m. at Holliday Park and 2-3 p.m. at Southeastway Park. Cost is \$4 per person but pre-registration is required. To sign up, or for more information, call the Holliday Park Nature Center at 327-7180 or call Southeastway Park at 861-5167.

WINE, CHEESE, AND ALL THAT JAZZ! — SATURDAY

The Convergence Jazz Ensemble. Cheeses and hors d'oeuvres. Local wines for the tasting. Sounds like a classy night out and a good break from the melancholy of the bipolar weather. The Johnson County Historical Society's annual fundraiser will offer all of this and more. Sample wines from local wineries such as Mallow Run Winery, Oliver Winery, Easley Winery, and Simmons Winery. Guests will also be able to participate in a silent auction. The fundraiser will take place at Johnson County Museum of History (135 N. Main Street) Sat. March 5 from 7-9 p.m. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Designated Driver tickets are also available for \$12. For reservations or more information call 317-346-4500 or e-mail bcundiff@co.johnson.in.us

BEER BUZZ

BY RITA KOHN



EVENTS

March 3, 6 p.m.: at both **Barley Island** locations. Tapping of "Whose Ear Double Red Ale," a big, malty double red ale featuring Summit, Cascade and CTZ hops; dry hopped with Cascade and CTZ to enhance the aroma. Served in goblets; available to-go in growlers.

March 3, 7 p.m.: **Binkley's Kitchen and Bar.** Representatives from Guinness will guide us through their history of beer-making; sampling Guinness, Guinness Extra Foreign Stout, Smithwick's, Kilkeny Cream Ale, Harp, and some different varieties of Bushmills Irish Whiskey and a special cocktail from Nigeria for you to try.

March 4, 8 p.m.: the **Rathskeller.** Tapping Sun King "Ring of Dingle" and announcing Winner of the Sun King/Indianapolis Indians Beer Naming Contest.

March 8, 6-9 p.m.: **Monon Food Company.** Four-course beer dinner paired with six Left Hand brews; \$25 per person. Reserve at 317-722-0176.

March 9, 6-9 p.m.: **Petite Chou Broad Ripple.** Four-course beer dinner paired with Sun King Orange Blossom Special, Doppelbock, Sunlight Cream Ale and cuvee de Sun King; \$65 per person. Reservations: 317-259-0765 or email rachael@cafepatachou.com

BREWS NEWS

Brew Bracket is premiering April 17: www.brew-bracket.com.

Crown Liquors was voted "Best Beer Retailer" by Indiana Ratebeer.com.



If you have an item for Beer Buzz, send an email at least two weeks in advance to beerbuzz@nuvo.net



If you have an item for the Culinary Picks, send an e-mail at least two weeks in advance to culinary@nuvo.net.

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Bag It

BY TYLER FALK
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

★★★★☆☆ (PG)

Ever wonder why Indiana would ever try to make grocery stores charge 10 cents for every plastic bag you use? Why are some places banning them all together? What's the big deal about plastic bags anyway? Jeb Berrier had some of these same questions when his small town in Colorado decided to start a competition between a neighboring town to see who could decrease their use of plastic bags the most. "I'm an average guy," Berrier said at the beginning of the documentary film *Bag It*. "I'm not what you consider a treehugger. I try to be informed. I try to do the right thing. But I find that it can be a bit overwhelming at times."

He must have felt the same way about working on this film. Because what starts out as an exploration of a small part of our grocery shopping experience — the plastic bag — takes him to Asia, the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and deep inside his own body; from plastic packaging to whale guts to chemicals that shrink penis size.

On March 4, Epworth United Methodist Church will show the film as part of an eco-film double feature with WFYI's *Lead Paint: Indiana's Poisoned Children*. The event starts at 7 p.m., and is free to the public — donations are accepted.

The stunning statistics alone are worth your time. Sixty thousand plastic bags are used in the U.S. every five seconds; 2 million plastic water bottles are used in the U.S. every five minutes; less than 25 percent are recycled; some parts of the ocean have 40 times more plastic than plankton.

But Berrier does a good job of not getting all preachy on us, and has fun, while also showing how single-use products — that we might use for only a few minutes — are damaging the environment throughout their entire lifecycle.

He maps the path, from the creation of plastic using fossil fuels to its journey to the North Pacific Gyre — where a waste island of plastic and other debris the size of Texas is floating in the Pacific Ocean. In one scene, a whale floats to shore and inside its stomach is 19 square feet of plastic.

And there's no easy answer. It's nice to think you're doing your part by recycling plastic, but what we find out is that much of the plastic we recycle is exported to Asia. Some of the most disturbing scenes in the film are clips from these "recycling" facilities where people are sorting through piles of our plastic waste — on their hands and knees sorting through trash — and

what they can't use is burned. The people are paid very little to dig through what we don't want and breathe in toxic chemicals at the same time. Think of it as a different sort of sweat-shop.

In the end, whether you bring your own bags or use one plastic bag for every item you buy at the grocery store, you'll have a better understanding of why Indiana would ever even consider charging 10 cents for a plastic bag — like in House Bill 1521. After watching this film you'll probably wonder what's taking them so long. Because ultimately, as Berrier discovers, 10 cents a bag is a steal compared to the cost it has to our planet and our health. ■



Submitted photo
If you look closely, you'll see the face of Jeb Berrier in that plastic costume. His film, "Bag It," airs for free at Epworth Church on Friday at 7 p.m.

FILM CLIPS

The following are reviews of films currently playing in Indianapolis area theaters. Reviews are written by Ed Johnson-Ott (EJO) unless otherwise noted.

OPENING

THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
(PG-13)

Trippy thriller. Matt Damon stars as a man who glimpses his future — and the agents of Fate that make the future happen — and realizes he wants something else, which means he must face the formidable men of the Adjustment Bureau. Based on a short story by Philip K. Dick (*Total Recall*, *Minority Report*, *Blade Runner*). Emily Blunt co-stars, with John Slattery (*Mad Men*) as the head Man in Black. 105 minutes. Read Ed's review Friday on nuvo.net.



Submitted photo
Matt Damon as David Norris and Emily Blunt as Elise Sellas star in 'The Adjustment Bureau.'

BEASTLY
(PG-13)

Updated teen romance version of *Beauty and the Beast*. When studly Kyle (Alex Pettyfer) humiliates Goth classmate Kendra (Mary-Kate Olsen), she casts a spell making him physically beastly until he can find someone who will love him despite his appearance. Banished to Brooklyn by his callous father (Peter Krause), he receives aid from a housekeeper (LisaGay Hamilton) and a blind tutor (Neil Patrick Harris). Then he runs into a drug addict about to kill a dealer ... see, I said it was an updated version of the fairy tale. 95 minutes.

RANGO
(PG)

Computer-animated action-adventure with some rude humor. Johnny Depp, Abigail Breslin, Isla Fisher, Alfred Molina, Ray Winstone and Harry Dean Stanton provide voices in this tale of a household pet chameleon who goes on an adventure to find his true self and ends up in the gritty, gun-slinging town of Dirt, where he becomes Sheriff Rango. 107 minutes.

TAKE ME HOME TONIGHT
(R)

The press notes describe the film as "a raunchy, romantic and ultimately touching blast from the past set to an awesome soundtrack of timeless rock and hip-hop hits." In other words, it's time to PAR-TAY like it's 1989!!! Starring Topher Grace, Teresa Palmer, Anna Faris and Dan Fogler, with Chris Pratt from "Parks and Recreation." 114 minutes.

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Ben Taylor

After 10 years solo, James's son joins dad on stage

BY WADE COGGESHALL
MUSIC@NUVO.NET

Ben Taylor tried his hardest not to follow in his famous parents' footsteps. But ultimately he knew music was his destiny.

"I fought it; fought it hard," Taylor, 34, said of his career choice during a recent phone interview. "All my heroes are musicians, and not just my folks. It's all the people I wish I was. Either musicians or Jedis, and I think being a musician is easier."

Taylor is the son of James Taylor and Carly Simon, two of the biggest musical stars of the 1970s. He began playing guitar at age 11, but had trepidation about writing and singing his own songs. How could he ever live up to his parents? Instead he tried other activities that interested him. There was organic gardening (something Taylor still likes to do on the side). For a while he worked as a wilderness tour guide.

"But at the end of the day, it seemed like nothing would make me satisfied with myself the same way I would be if I wrote songs and performed them," Taylor said.

He says this just a few days before beginning his first-ever tour with his father. It's in town March 4 at the Murat Theatre. Taylor said they'll perform together at each show, splitting the set list between their repertoires. They'll also play some of each other's songs.

"It's going to be nice little amalgamation," said Taylor, who admitted having a lot of nerves going into opening night. "But more than that, it's just excitement. The nerves and excitement mingle and become exactly what I need to prepare myself."

Kung Folk

He's been a solo artist for almost 10 years now, and spent much of that time distancing himself from his pedigree.

"For me to get a start as my own — and trying to minimize the connection to them as much as possible — was what I needed to do in order to ensure I could be competent enough to do this on my own," Taylor said.

And yet no matter how much he resisted, he knew he couldn't break that artistic bond. Initially Taylor performed in a band format. His first released album, *Famous Among the Barns*, delved more into trippy psychedelica than the cultivated folk his parents sang. The follow-up, *Another Run Around the Sun*, was more in line with his acoustic heritage, though Taylor often gives his music a contemporary spin with everything from electronic flourishes to a hip-hop cadence.

"I reckon it's time I went out and toured with my old man," he said. "I didn't want to get up there and do shows with him and be so green and nervous that I couldn't play the chords right. He's such a pro and I've been seeing him do this so well for so long that I wanted to make a good impression."

Still, Taylor has proven to be his own man. He's never shied from pursuing his own passions and goals. He's been a dedicated practitioner of the martial arts for years now, something he attributes to having a kidney removed when he was only 3.

"It forced an expansive worldview on me at a young age," Taylor said. "I got the idea life was very fragile. That made me want to start getting very strong for whatever life would have to throw at me."

It's become such a part of his identity that when asked to describe his sound Taylor coined the term "kung folk."

"I figured what do I do? I kind of make folk music, but it's a little more contemporary and maybe with a bit more kick," he said.

Learning to listen

Taylor has also dabbled in acting, most notably as Cal Cooper on the NBC comedy-drama *American Dreams*, which ran for three seasons in the early 2000s. According to Taylor, the show's creators designed a character based on him so he could play himself.

"It was still difficult because when you put a camera on, it's hard to be yourself," he said. "Being someone else I can hardly even imagine."

Taylor is focused on music now, but acting is something he'd like to explore further at some point.

"I'm cognizant of the fact that I'm completely inexperienced," he said. "I wouldn't enter lightly into an acting scenario with professionals. That would be like not knowing how to play an instrument and going on stage and trying to play a concert."

Instead he's got the more modest ambition of learning how to become a better listener. It's the concept behind his upcoming release, the appropriately-named *Listening*.

"A lot of performers are not great audiences," Taylor said. "I realize that about myself, and I've been trying to make improvements about the way I listen to other people's music and when they're speaking."

For all the roundabout way he's gone to get to this point, Taylor's far from being full of himself. And that's just fine.

"I think I'm a pretty hopeless, immature fool, and I'm happy about it," Taylor said. "Everything I've done has set me up just right to be who I am. For better and worse, I've turned out to be the right guy for this life." ■



JAMES TAYLOR, BEN TAYLOR

Murat Theatre at Old National Centre, 502 N. New Jersey St.
Friday, March 4, 8 p.m., sold out, all ages

onnuvo.net



■ **Nichols:** The Cars return, Bobbie Lancaster teases, Johnny Cash solicits artwork

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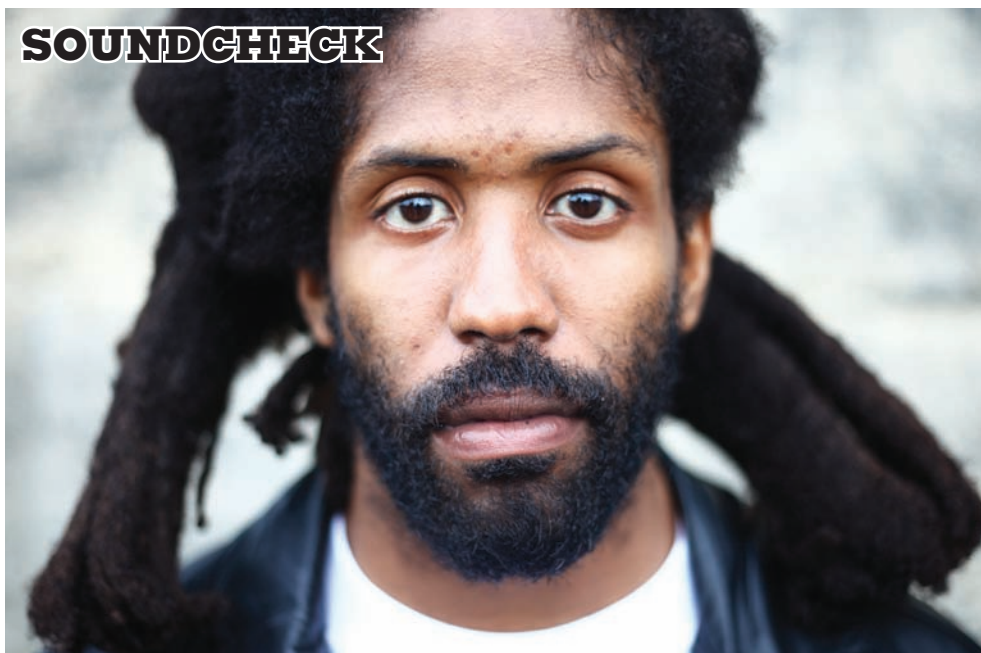


■ **Kagiwada:** Beta Male release show, Lindsay Mac at The Irving
■ **Simonetto:** Cage the Elephant at The Vogue



■ **NUVO's Top Five Concerts** on IMC with Sarah Myer

SOUNDCHECK



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Murs

Wednesday

CELTIC

GAELIC STORM

The Vogue, 6259 N. College Ave., 8 p.m.
\$20 advance (plus applicable fees), \$22 door, 21+
The Santa Monica-based Celtic rock band Gaelic Storm survived an unplugged stint as house band on James Cameron's *Titanic*, playing for third-class passengers as they sunk into the solitude of the sea. They've gone on to become fan favorites at Indy Irish Fest with a repertoire very much appropriate to the event, equal parts folk songs with authentic Irish trimmings (fiddle, bagpipes) and originals that challenge the idea of authentic Irishness (and especially those who claim to bleed green but have never been to their "homeland").

Friday

SINGER-SONGWRITER

CARA JEAN WAHLERS AND GROVER PARIDO, KRISTA DETOR

Locals Only, 2449 E. 56th St., 8 p.m., \$10, 21+
A couple Indiana singer-songwriters share the bill: Cara Jean Wahlers, whose 2010 collaboration with cellist Grover Parido, *Goodnight Charlotte*, charted on this year's *Village Voice* Pazz and Jop Poll, and Bloomington's Krista Detor, whose most recent album, *Chocolate Paper Suites*, was called "a small miracle" by Germany's *Rolling Stone* and "intriguing" and "impressive" by *The Guardian*.

ROCK

POP LOLITA, PRAVADA, CARRIE PIETZ

Talbott Street Nightclub, 2145 N. Talbott St. 9 p.m., \$5 cover plus \$5 suggested donation, 21+
By most accounts, the inaugural Girls Rock Indianapolis day camp was a success, helping to turn mild-mannered middle schoolers into nascent rock stars within the course of a week, capping with a public performance at the Earth House that could have brought tears to even the most disaffected guitar-slinger. And thus, the folks behind Girls Rock (notably the members of local band Neon Love Life) will do it again this year, with the camp slated for early August, and a fundraising and consciousness-raising concert scheduled Friday at Talbott Street. Pop Lolita, the late-'90s dream pop band that would seem not to be broken up anymore, being as this is their second "reunion" show within a week, will headline, joined by the pleasantly abrasive indie rock band Pravada and singer-songwriter Carrie Pietz (without her goofily-named backing band, Her Pleasant Disposition).

Saturday

HIP-HOP

MURS, TABI BONNEY

Earth House, 237 N. East St. 7 p.m., \$14 advance (eventbrite.com), \$16 door, 21+
The West coast rapper Murs has been making smart, mainstream-ready hip-hop for over 15 years, sometimes on major labels, but usually on the underground and in collaboration with indie hip-hop stars like Slug, the Atmosphere emcee with whom he formed the duo Felt.

ROCK

THE SHAKE UPS, SALVADOR DALAI LLAMA FARM, NOAH EAST

Irving Theater, 5505 W. Washington St., 8 p.m., \$5, 21+
When Indy music scene veterans Kathie and Patrick O'Connor moved back from California last year, they brought along with them their power-pop group The Shake Ups. The band premieres new material Saturday at the Irving Theater.

HIP-HOP

SPRING TRAINING

Locals Only, 2449 E. 56th St., 10 p.m., \$5, 21+
In a sense, folks in the music scene, like in the baseball world, do kind of take it easy during the winter months, when festivals have run their course, when bands on national tours aren't looking for support, when it's too cold to even think about going out. So the title to this hip-hop showcase is at least a little apt. Featuring Mic Sol & Ace One with SPStar, Oreo Jones, Son of Thought & F.I.R.E., Hinx Jones and DJ Deadrisk.

DANCE

CARNAVAL

The Jazz Kitchen, 5377 N. College Ave., 10 p.m. \$12 advance (brownpapertickets.com), \$15 door, 21+
See Do or Die, pg. 14.

Sunday

ROCK

THE PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE

Murat Theatre, 502 N. New Jersey St. 7:30 p.m., \$32.50-79.75 (plus applicable fees), all-ages
A Pink Floyd tribute show devoted to keeping it "intimate" and achieving the "sensual attack of Floyd," according to the show's website. The band will perform *Animals* in its entirety, in addition to all of your favorite hits.

Continued on page 28.

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SOUNDCHECK

Continued from page 27.

Tuesday

FOLK

ARI HEST, MARS OR THE MOON
Radio Radio, 1119 E. Prospect St., 9 p.m., \$10, 21+
NYC-based singer-songwriter and local favorite Ari Hest returns to town, touring behind a brand new album, the depressingly-titled *Sunset over Hope Street*. While his stuff bears superficial resemblance to Jason Mraz and his ilk, Hest has a little stronger voice and a bit more of a common touch — there's good reason that he plays house concerts just as often as club gigs.

JAM

PHAT TUESDAY FEAT. TWIN CATS, LADYMOON, THE BREAKDOWN KINGS, DJ INDIANA JONES

Room 929 at The Ripple Inn, 929 E. Westfield Blvd. 10 p.m. \$5, 21+

A gathering of jam bands featuring industry leader and Owl Studios recording artist Twin Cats, up-and-comer LadyMoon, 2010 Battle of Birdy's winner The Breakdown Kings (not really a jam band, more rap-rock) and DJ Indiana Jones, y'know, jamming it on the turntables. All in celebration of Mardi Gras. Expect it to be packed; the bands alone will take up a lot of available space. ■

Friday & Tuesday



The Terror Pigeon Dance Revolt

SUBMITTED PHOTO

The folks at Fountain Square's SpaceCamp Gallery will cater to both cerebral and animal tastes this week, with interactive sound art installations Friday, then a dance party in the Big Car space Tuesday. All events are part of the Gallery's SoundBlock exhibition, which opens this weekend and runs through the month. Roanoke, Ind.'s John Collins McCormick is behind one of the sound installations, called "Flow," about which we know very little at this point, except that will be, according to a SpaceCamp press release, "concerned with sound and how it inhabits space and how we interact with sound." Montreal's Eric Boivin will also present work, including elements from the Montreal Sound Map, an interactive aural map of the city of Montreal being compiled by Boivin and others. Check out www.montrealsound-map.com to take a look; essentially, Boivin and his cohorts are geo-tagging field recordings from locations around Montreal, classifying those recordings not only by location, but also by time of day and types of sound (human, mechanical, natural), and then inputting all of them into Google Maps.

While the sound map is pretty nifty, NYC's The Terror Pigeon Dance Revolt, called "the performance art party band to end all performance art party bands" by *Papermag*, may very well throw the dance party to end all dance parties Tuesday night in the Big Car space. The group, whose membership ranges from four to forty depending on the show (we're guessing closer to four when on the road), plays a synth-driven, over-the-top dance-rock that works pretty well on record (their debut full-length appeared on Luaka Bop last year), but which is apparently best experienced live, as part of delirious, interactive live show heavy on props and costumes (coats made of stuffed animals, pumpkin suits, football player suits, suit suits, disco ball hats, glitter, strobe lights).

SOUNDBLOCK

MARCH 4 IN THE SPACECAMP GALLERY
(Room 211 of the Murphy Art Center, 1043 Virginia Ave.)
featuring John Collins McCormick and Eric Boivin, 8 p.m., free

MARCH 8 AT BIG CAR
(Room 215 of the Murphy), featuring The Terror Pigeon Dance Revolt and Skything, 8 p.m.

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REVIEW



P. David and Allison Hazel of Beta Male handle guitar duties at Radio Radio.

PHOTO BY STACY KAGIWADA

FRIDAY

BETA MALE, ANDY D, SLOTHPOP, POP LOLITA
Radio Radio, Feb. 25

★★★★★

When Beta Male premiered their new record before an absolutely packed house at Radio Radio last Friday, one thing became clear: Despite the band's recently laid-back demeanor, they still demand to be experienced live.

The whole evening was an exercise in entertaining diversity. Things started out with recently reunited Pop Lolita, whose blend of rollicking pop and energetic alt-rock could've been played on college radio in 1991, just before grunge went mainstream and it all went to hell. Then Slothpop, with their smooth instrumentals and haunting vocals. Not to mention whatever the hell it is Andy D does. Imagine Andy Kaufman's Tony Clifton lounge singer was caught in a horrific teleporter accident with www.peopleofwalmart.com. What to call it? Hillbilly-core? Redneck rap? Whatever it

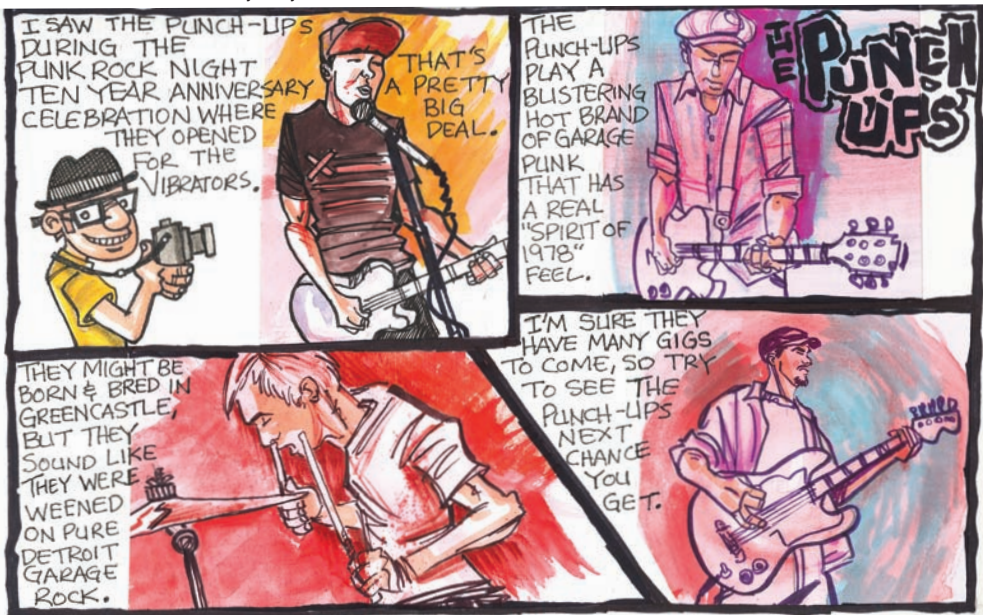
is, it's insane and weirdly compelling.

Back to Beta Male. Jess Hack performed in evening wear and Allison Hazel performed without pants, because that's just the way Beta Male rolls. The performance ran into some trouble with the sound mix in the first few songs (a rare thing at Radio Radio, in my experience), but it was all creative mayhem from there on out.

On stage, Beta Male traded the careful polish of the album for a raw-as-hell approach. I didn't quite appreciate how intricate the guitar bits were on the album until T.J. Briggs had to whip them out live. P. David Hazel's vocals came off as even more intensely personal as he crooned while pounding away at the drums. Jess Hack and Allison Hazel's backing vocals became manic howls, every note shaking the floor. It was an example what a good live show should be, and an excellent introduction to the latest volume of Beta Male, whatever that may turn out to be.

—PAUL F. P. POGUE

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REVIEW



PHOTO BY STEPHEN SIMONETTO

Cage the Elephant's Matthew Shultz rides the Vogue crowd.

FRIDAY

CAGE THE ELEPHANT

The Vogue, Feb. 25

The sign had been hanging on the entrance to The Vogue for weeks: "Cage The Elephant is sold-out. Really — you can't get tickets." And on Friday night at 10 p.m., it definitely felt like a sold-out show. There was no chance of finding a decent vantage point in the balcony and the floor was shoulder-to-shoulder all the way past the lower level bar. As soon as Cage The Elephant took stage and began to play, the pit in front of the stage lost all composure.

The band's repertoire was split evenly between new and old material, alternating between songs from the band's debut album and fresh tracks from *Thank You Happy Birthday*. Interestingly, the crowd was just as involved during songs from the new album as during older tunes. To me, this signaled true fan dedication rather than a case of the "I heard their single on the radio and now I'm their biggest fan" syndrome. The band practiced good crowd control, too; extra-rowdy songs were frequently followed up by something slower and calmer, even lullaby-esque at times.

The surf-flavored "Indy Kids" gave lead singer Matthew Shultz a chance to strut his stuff, flapping his arms in a halfhazard swimming motion as white strobe lights flickered relentlessly. In a total state of pandemonium, a man with a hardy build was tossed into the air by his buddies and sent sailing across the sea of raging bodies. During an interlude, the song slowed, its mood shifting from screaming chaos to a mysterious daze. Mumbles and moans spilled from Shultz's mouth before

he dropped his fatigued body into the crowd, repeatedly babbling "I want to be just... like... you..."

Cage saved "Ain't No Rest For The Wicked" until the end of the show, playing it just before closer "Shake Me Down." A few bars in, Shultz stopped the song and addressed The Vogue security staff who were disciplining particularly disorderly audience members. "Stop fuckin' with our audience!" he yelled. "I appreciate what you're doing, but they're okay." The crowd went wild with approval.

During a three-song encore that included a rousing cover of the Talking Heads classic "Psycho Killer," Shultz dove into the crowd from atop the towering speakers stage right, just as he did when the band opened for Silversun Pickups in 2009. This time though, the audience knew what to do and immediately compressed with arms stretched high to the sky. Seconds later Shultz was on top of those arms, climbing across bodies as he headed towards the back of the floor. Fans from the balcony leaned over and reached for Shultz while those on the floor lifted him towards the ceiling. Despite their earlier disagreeable encounter, Vogue security safely escorted Shultz back to the stage.

Shultz made multiple attempts to finish the night with a solo acoustic version of "Right Before My Eyes," but ultimately said "fuck it" and put his guitar down to instead perform a cappella. Except that it wasn't really a cappella, since the entire room sang every word with him.

—DANIELLE LOOK



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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Seven-year-old strongman

Plus, learning the theory of shampooing

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

Getting Old, Young: (1) Jack Smeltzer broke a record in the tractor pull championships in Columbus, Ohio, in January — doing a “full (track-length) pull” of 692 pounds. Jack is 7 years old. The National Kiddie Tractor Pullers Association (holding 80 events a year for ages 3 through 8) uses bicycles instead of motors. Ms. Brooke Wilker, 5, was the youngest champ, lugging 300 pounds 28 feet. (2) Walmart announced in January that it would soon offer a full line of makeup especially for 8-year-olds (and up), by GeoGirl, including mascara, sheer lip gloss, pink blush and purple eye shadow, all supposedly designed for young skin. (An executive of Aspire cosmetics said her research revealed a potential market of 6-year-olds.)

CONTINUED ON PG. 35

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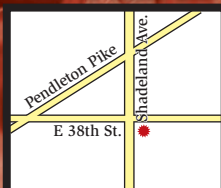
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Government in action!

• Everyone washes hair, but those who want a license to apply shampoo in Texas need 150 hours of training, with 100 hours in "theory and practice of shampooing," including a study of "neck anatomy." A February *Wall Street Journal* report on excessiveness of state regulation highlighted California's year-long training to be a barber, Alabama's 750-hour schooling standard for a manicurist's license, and Michigan's 500 practice hours for performing massages. (By contrast, many less-tightly regulated states seem not to suffer. Connecticut, without licensing, fielded only six complaints last year against manicurists — four of which involved disputes over gift cards.) Next up for licensing, perhaps: cat groomers in Ohio.

• What Budget Crunch? The South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* reported in January that despite an array of pressing problems, the Broward County public school system has paid about \$100,000 per year since 2004 to build and maintain special gardens at selected schools in order to lure butterflies for pupils to study.

• Government That Works: (1) The 2009 federal stimulus program came through just in time with \$34,000 for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Kearneysville, W.Va., laboratory. Work on the recent dangerous increase in Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs was in jeopardy because money had run out for design of a workable air distribution system for the offices. (2) The City Commission of San Antonio, Fla. (population 1,052), passed an ordinance in January restricting, to a tiny portion of town, where registered sex offenders could live. However, San Antonio has only one sex offender, and that man is exempt from the law because he already lives there.

Great art!

• David Morice, of Iowa City, Iowa, a teacher at Kirkwood Community College, was best known for a series of "Poetry Comics" until he decided last year to write 100-page poems every day for 100 days, until he had a book totaling 10,000 pages (actually, 10,119). For some reason, the University of Iowa Libraries has published the finished poem, online and in a 2-foot-high hardcopy stack. (Strangely, in a 480-word article describing Morice's feat, the Iowa City *Press-Citizen* included not even a hint about the poems' subject matter.)

• In January, Toronto sculptor-photographer Lisa Murphy added to her reputation for devising "porn for the blind" by producing four more hand-molded erotic figures generated by using clay to replicate photographic scenes of nude and lingerie-

clad models (accompanied by descriptions in Braille). "The butt was the hardest to sculpt," she said. "I wanted to get it nice and even, and give it a feminine softness so it would actually feel like a woman's butt." Her first book, *Tactile Mind*, with 17 such raised erotic works, sells for \$225 (Cdn).

• Ripley's Believe It or Not! museum is already home to an artist's rendition of da Vinci's "The Last Supper" made from burned toast, and now comes a recent version by Laura Bell of Roscommon, Mich.: da Vinci's masterpiece made with clothes-dryer lint. Bell said she did about 800 hours of laundry of various-colored towels to obtain lint of the proper hues, and then worked 200 more hours to construct the 14-foot-long, 4-foot-high mural.

The continuing crisis

• Surprise! (1) New Zealand traffic officer Andy Flitton cited an unnamed speeder recently for the second time in two years — 11,000 miles from the spot of the first ticket. Flitton had moved from the U.K. to New Zealand, and unknown to him, the motorist himself had relocated to New Zealand last year. When Flitton stopped the man in Wellington in December 2010, the motorist recognized Flitton as the one who had ticketed him on the A5 highway near London. (2) Rap singer Trevell Coleman, trying to bring "closure" and "get right with God" for having shot a man in 1993 (since he was never caught), confessed the assault to New York City police in December, hoping that his humility might impress a judge. However, police checked and then booked Coleman — for murder. Said Coleman, "(F) or some reason, I really didn't think that (the victim had) died."

• "That Was Easy!": (1) Several students at Texas' Carrizo Springs High School were suspended in December, and a teacher placed on leave, after a parent complained that her son had been grabbed by the shirt and stapled to a classroom wall. She said it was at least the second time that it had happened. (2) Jodi Gilbert was arrested in Jamestown, N.Y., in January and charged with domestic violence — stapling her boyfriend in the head several times with a Stanley Hammer Tacker.

• In November, a Taiwanese factory owner accidentally dropped 200 \$1,000 bills (worth about \$6,600 in U.S. dollars) into an industrial shredder, turning them into confetti. Luckily, Taiwan's Justice Ministry employs a forensic handwriting analyst who excels at jigsaw puzzles on the side. Ms. Liu Hui-fen worked almost around the clock for seven days to piece together the

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Least competent criminals

• Laconic Perps: (1) A female motorist in Kitsap County, Wash., reported in January being motioned by another driver to pull over, but she ignored him. The man then tried to ratchet up his credibility, motioning her over again but this time holding a hand-scrawled sign reading "sheriff." (She remained unimpressed.) *Seattle Weekly* reported that a similar incident had occurred several months earlier. (2) Robert Michelson was arrested in Farmington, Conn., in February, after calling a 911 operator to inquire about the lawfulness of the marijuana plant he was growing. The operator informed him that it was illegal. (All 911 calls are automatically traced, and Michelson was soon arrested.)

Recurring themes

• People Who Ran Over Themselves: (1) A transit driver was hospitalized in December after his idling bus slipped out of gear and ran over him as he walked around it in front of Waikato Hospital in New Zealand. (2) A 37-year-old woman in Melbourne, Australia, was hospitalized in November after forgetting to engage her parking brake. The car rolled backward down her driveway, knocking her over, then hitting a fence, thrusting forward and running her down a second time. (3) A 67-year-old golfer died on the Evanston (Ill.) Golf Club course in November, apparently run over by his own electric cart. (He was discovered underneath, and the medical examiner ruled the death accidental.)



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by TOM TOMORROW

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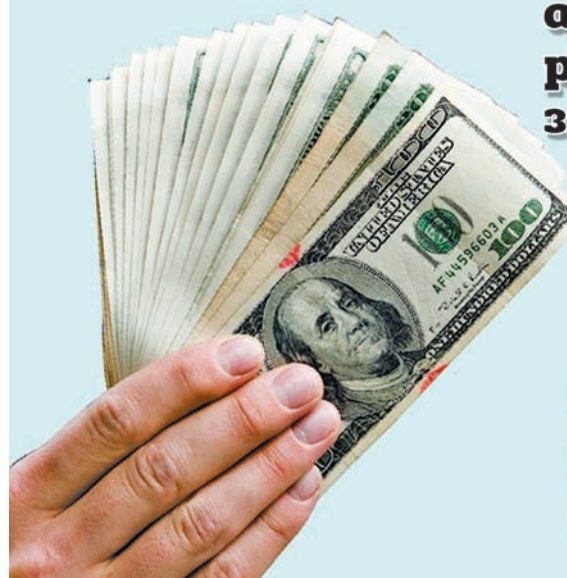
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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

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ARIES (March 21-April 19): "The most fundamental form of human stupidity is forgetting what we were trying to do in the first place," said Friedrich Nietzsche. So for instance, if you're the United States government and you invade and occupy Afghanistan in order to wipe out al-Qaeda, it's not too bright to continue fighting and dying and spending obscene amounts of money long after the al-Qaeda presence there has been eliminated. (There are now fewer than 100 al-Qaeda fighters in that country: tinyurl.com/forgetwhy.) What's the equivalent in your personal life, Aries? What noble aspiration propelled you down a winding path that led to entanglements having nothing to do with your original aspiration? It's time to correct the mistake.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): The Carnival season gets into full swing this weekend and lasts through Mardi Gras next Tuesday night. Wherever you are, Taurus, I suggest you use this as an excuse to achieve new levels of mastery in the art of partying. Of all the signs of the zodiac, you're the one that is most in need of and most deserving of getting immersed in rowdy festivities that lead to maximum release and relief. To get you in the right mood, read these thoughts from literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. He said a celebration like this is a "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order," and encourages "the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions."

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): When Bob Dylan first heard the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, he only made it through the first few tunes. "Turn that s--- off!" he said. "It's too good!" He was afraid his own creative process might get intimidated, maybe even blocked, if he allowed himself to listen to the entire masterpiece. I suspect the exact opposite will be true for you in the coming weeks, Gemini. As you expose yourself to excellence in your chosen field, you'll feel a growing motivation to express excellence yourself. The inspiration that will be unleashed in you by your competitors will trump any of the potentially deflating effects of your professional jealousy.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Jungian storyteller Clarissa Pinkola Estes says one of her main influences is the Curanderismo healing tradition from Mexico and Central America. "In this tradition a story is 'holy,' and it is used as medicine," she told *Radiance* magazine. "The story is not told to lift you up, to make you feel better, or to entertain you, although all those things can be true. The story is meant to take the spirit into a descent to find something that is lost or missing and to bring it back to consciousness again." You need stories like this, Cancerian, and you need them now. It's high time to recover parts of your soul that you have neglected or misplaced or been separated from.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You've been pretty smart lately, but I think you could get even smarter. You have spied secrets in the dark, and teased out answers from unlikely sources, and untangled knots that no one else has had the patience to mess with — and yet I suspect there are even greater glories possible for you. For inspiration, Leo, memorize this haiku-like poem by Geraldine C. Little: "The white spider / whiter still / in the lightning's flash."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I wouldn't try to stop you, Virgo, if you wanted to go around singing the Stone Roses' song "I Wanna Be Adored." I wouldn't be embarrassed for you if you turned your head up to the night sky and serenaded the stars with a chant of "I wanna be adored, I deserve to be adored, I demand to be adored." And I might even be willing to predict that your wish will be fulfilled — on one condition, which is that you also express your artful adoration for some worthy creature.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "The difference between the right word and the almost right word," said Mark Twain, "is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." Because the difference between the right word and the almost right word will be so crucial for you in the coming days, Libra, I urge you to maintain extra

vigilance towards the sounds that come out of your mouth. But don't be tense and repressed about it. Loose, graceful vigilance will actually work better. By the way, the distinction between right and almost right will be equally important in other areas of your life as well. Be adroitly discerning.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Dear Rob: In your horoscopes you often write about how we Scorpios will encounter interesting opportunities, invitations to be powerful, and creative breakthroughs. But you rarely discuss the deceptions, selfish deeds, and ugliness of the human heart that might be coming our way — especially in regards to what we are capable of ourselves. Why do you do this? My main concern is not in dealing with what's going right, but rather on persevering through difficulty. - Scorpio in the Shadows." Dear Scorpio: You have more than enough influences in your life that encourage you to be fascinated with darkness. I may be the only one that's committed to helping you cultivate the more undeveloped side of your soul: the part that thrives on beauty and goodness and joy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Acupuncturists identify an energetic point in the ear called the spirit gate. If it's stuck closed, the spirit is locked in; if it's stuck open, the spirit is always coming and going, restless and unsettled. What's ideal, of course, is that the spirit gate is not stuck in any position. Then the spirit can come and go as it needs to, and also have the option of retreating and protecting itself. I'd like you to imagine that right now a skilled acupuncturist is inserting a needle in the top of your left ear, where it will remain for about 20 minutes. In the meantime, visualize your spirit gate being in that state of harmonious health I described.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): In his parody music video, "Sickest Buddhist," comedian Arj Barker invokes a hip hop sensibility as he brags about his spiritual prowess. Noting how skilled he is when it comes to mastering his teacher's instructions, he says, "The instructor just told us to do a 45-minute meditation / but I nailed it in 10." I expect you will have a similar facility in the coming week, Capricorn: Tasks that might be challenging for others may seem like child's play to you. I bet you'll be able to sort quickly through complications that might normally take days to untangle. (See the NSFW video here: tinyurl.com/illBuddhist.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The sixth astronaut to walk on the moon was engineer Edgar Mitchell. He asserts that extraterrestrials have visited Earth and that governments are covering up that fact. The second astronaut to do a moonwalk was engineer Buzz Aldrin. He says that there is unquestionably an artificial structure built on Phobos, a moon of Mars. Some scientists dispute the claims of these experts, insisting that aliens are myths. Who should we believe? Personally, I lean towards Mitchell and Aldrin. Having been raised by an engineer father, I know how unlikely it is for people with that mindset to make extraordinary claims. If you have to choose between competing authorities any time soon, Aquarius, I recommend that like me, you opt for the smart mavericks instead of the smart purveyors of conventional wisdom.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): If I were you, Pisces, I'd make interesting fun your meme of the week. According to my reading of the astrological omens, you will be fully justified in making that your modus operandi and your raison d'être. For best results, you should put a priority on pursuing experiences that both amuse you and captivate your imagination. As you consider whether to accept any invitation or seize any opportunity, make sure it will teach you something you don't already know and also transport you into a positive emotional state that gets your endorphins flowing.

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